VIRTUAL Spring Fling

to benefit Denville Beautification

denvilleblooms.org
Dear Friends and Beautification Supporters

We were in the final stages of planning our inaugural Spring Fling event when the arrival of Covid-19 brought that to a grinding halt. Artists had brought together a wonderful collection of creations for your enjoyment and auctioning pleasure, our musicians were getting tuned up, and DBC volunteers had brought huge bouquets of spring flower to an early bloom. Alas, it was not to be.

We are grateful to the many DBC supporters who contributed to our efforts in this first Spring Fling, and look forward to doing justice to your contributions when it becomes possible again. In the meantime, we hope you’ll enjoy this program we had planned for the event, and urge you to support the fine businesses who support DBC.

Stay well, and enjoy the wonderful world of flowers all around you.

Dave Sipple
DBC Chair

denvilleblooms.org
Dear Supporter,

Welcome! Today is the inaugural – and what will be an annual – Beautification Gala. On behalf of the Beautification Committee, the Town Council, Downtown Denville and all our residents, thank you for coming today and supporting the hard work and talents of our volunteer horticulturists, landscape architects, landscapers, gardeners and apprentices. We hope you have a very enjoyable afternoon.

Muriel Hepner and Peggy Gray took great pride in our community, while starting the Historical Society and P.R.I.D.E. Council. They started recruiting volunteers and planting flowers around Downtown Denville calling themselves the Beautification Committee, eventually becoming an official Township Committee in 1972. In 1976, the Bicentennial year, Franz Fuertges designed, built, and donated the first mini-park in Denville on Broadway and Bloomfield Avenues on behalf of the Beautification Committee. In cooperation with the Rotary Club, a fountain and flag pole were added and the obelisk came later through the efforts of Bill Richards. No township money was spent.

The Committee has kept our downtown in bloom every spring through fall and has evolved over the decades. Over the last 12 years, the membership of the committee has grown and the scope of their projects have increased in area all around our town as well as in magnitude. This has been accomplished without increasing the Beautification line item in the budget. This is because of the generosity of our community, and the committee’s frugality. Year after year, they somehow seem to outdo themselves.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the entire volunteer committee past and present. The displays that you have created around Denville are gorgeous and at times breathtaking. I love watching people taking pictures of your work. Your work is one of the reasons I hear people say, “Denville - I love that town!”

Mayor Thomas W. Andes
Throughout history, it was a spark that ignited a reaction or a movement that would influence human behavior. Lady Bird Johnson was the one who gave this spark with her National Road and Highway Beautification Program. A group of Denville ladies responded under the leadership of Muriel Hepner by founding the Denville Beautification Committee (DBC). Since the founding of the DBC, many things have changed in Denville, so did the structure and activities of the DBC: a greater involvement in community affairs, expansion of landscape projects beyond the downtown area, and fundraising for these activities.

Franz Fuertges  
DBC Member and Advisor

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

It is believed that Denville’s name is derived from Daniel Denton, a purchaser of the Elizabethtown Tract, who explored the area in the 1660’s. The area now known as Denville was in the East Jersey portion on state maps and became part of Rockaway. In 1913, it was incorporated as its own town. An alternate – but less likely – explanation is that it derives from a den of wild animals in the river area.

James Prior
A SHORT HISTORY OF
DENVILLE BEAUTIFICATION

When I came to Denville in 1963, the town was a quite different community than what it is now. We had bought a house on Cedar Lake and during summertime it was a lively place, but by autumn it got very quiet. There weren’t many traffic lights in town, no need for them, since traffic was sparse; a good place to raise your children. It was a different time, many things have changed since, but one thing that has been maintained during all these years - the will to make Denville a better place to live in.

One of those remarkable facts is that Denville has a great number of volunteer civic organizations. One of these committees is the Denville Beautification Committee (DBC). It took no great effort by Muriel Hepner to convince me to join the DBC. At that time, the DBC served only as an advisory committee. The recommended work was done by the Department of Public Works (DPW).

The bicentennial year of 1976 was the year the DBC made a great statement – a mini-park was placed right in the intersection of Broadway and Bloomfield Avenues. Not only did it bring color and interest, but also a safety feature for the traffic flow. No engineering and no public meetings were required. Mayor Walter Luger and the dignitaries dedicated this mini-park known as the Bicentennial Garden on July 4, 1976.

Bill Richard, then president of the Denville Rotary Club contacted the DBC to have a fountain designed, built and installed by the DBC, and an obelisk was placed in the garden to commemorate our war heroes. The financial burden was carried entirely by Rotary and Bill Richard. Several times at the Bicentennial Garden, improvements were made - Belgian block curbing, irrigation and various plantings. For some time, the township had hired and contracted individuals to maintain certain plantings and containers in the downtown area.
New life came into play when Mayor Ted Hussa created a totally voluntary committee to improve and expand the landscape beautification program. Instead of just maintaining existing perennial plantings, several annual plantings take place every year, new planting areas were created, additional containers along Main Street and Diamond Spring Road were constructed. This was only possible through the citizens of Denville who were willing to devote their time and talent to make the town they live in a reflection of their ideals. Even more astonishing, this was done with a budget that was only a fraction of what it was 15 years ago.

Since the DBC has taken the initiative, many improvements have been made. To realize the plans for the future, additional monies are needed.

The social events that the DBC membership enjoys several times a year hosted by a member, gave us the idea to expand this social get-together into an event where all citizens of Denville and beyond could participate and enjoy.

So far, the Spring Fling by which this event will be known is to take place at St. Francis Residential Community in their all-purpose room and an art gallery will be the focal point of this inaugural event. Glühwein and other beverages as well as hors d’oeuvres will be served, and live music provided. An auction and silent auction will be conducted to raise money for future projects of the DBC. The booklet will be made available and will contain stories, the schedule of that afternoon’s events and ads.

The citizens of Denville are fortunate to have neighbors and friends who involve themselves in the activities of this town. Denville would never have been the town that it is now without the volunteerism. With all the volunteers we have in town, there are still many who have not joined any of the civic organizations. We know from the reaction the DBC receives from the drive-by public passing by our work parties, that our work is most appreciated. To maintain the present appearance of Denville - not only in the downtown area, the entrances to the town, and other areas in your neighborhood, we (that is, the DBC) invite you to become a part of a group of people who not only make Denville a more beautiful place, but enjoy doing so.

It should be obvious a town’s reputation, appearance and culture does not come from the political machinery, but from the citizens who love and live in the town. Case in point, the DBC – guided, planned and executed entirely by volunteers.

_Franz Fuertges, DBC member and advisor_
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We are appreciative and grateful to the many members of the Denville Beautification Committee for their extraordinary dedication, commitment and hard work constantly creating the many seasonal beautiful, colorful floral displays throughout our Downtown and Greater Community. Each year they seem to create another spectacular garden area. They are a group of individuals of many different talent levels that work countless hours, enjoy each other’s company and it is their love of our community that makes our Downtown “The Crown Jewel of Morris County.”

Mayor Tom Andes
Council President John Murphy

TOWN COUNCIL
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DENVILLE
THE HUB OF VOLUNTEERISM

Denville Township can well lay claim to being the “Volunteer Capital of New Jersey” judging by its long, rich history of volunteerism and civic pride. While it is renowned as “The Hub of Morris County” for all the major roads (I-80, 46, 10 and 53) which traverse its 12-square-mile area and its access to trains and buses, its other reputation is that of a charming small town with a welcoming downtown district, a plethora of parks/playgrounds and civic involvement in improving the quality of life.

As a percentage of its 17,000 residents, it has a phenomenal number of residents who volunteer on committees, organizations and agencies – the Downtown Denville Business Improvement District, Denville Beautification Committee, the Fire Department, First Aid Squad, Social Service, Food Pantry, Rivers and Streams Committee and many others. They “give back” to the community. The township governing body has been in the forefront of improving Denville’s quality of life by forming various committees and providing funding and workers for projects. Some residents prefer to make individual efforts to show their pride in Denville.

There is a phalanx of professional organizations whose members volunteer for a myriad of civic endeavors. The Rotary is a good example of local organizations doing its share of volunteerism. Its professional members, who share a passion for community service, support a number of local programs. Perhaps the best known is its Annual Downtown Street Festival, now in its 38th year. It is one big Block Party, with carnival, food stands, beer garden, arts & crafts, and local merchants providing sale items inside and curbside.

A group of community leaders met in 1967 to form PRIDE (Planned Recommendations Improving Denville’s Environment), an amalgam of civic, educational, social and neighborhood organizations in town who work to enhance the quality of life. It is a clearing house for ideas and initiatives to improve Denville and has been active in a variety of programs from community blood drives to Rid Litter Day.

A prime example of civic concern occurred when the original plans for Interstate 80 showed that it would have gone directly through the town, shattering the downtown area with a strangling mass of ground level entrance and exit ramps. Thanks to Denville officials and an army of incensed citizens, cooler heads prevailed and I-80 was built over the town, not through it.
Denville’s volunteerism knows no bounds. When Hurricane Irene hit the township in August 2011, water rose to four or five feet above street level and people canoed down Broadway and side streets. Shops were inundated as cascades of water poured into basements, ruining inventory, damaging buildings. An email was sent out for volunteers and the town hall was overwhelmed with citizens willing to pitch in to help get the town back up and running. Some 500-plus volunteers came forward to lend helping hands and go door-to-door. The Volunteer Fire Department pumped out basements for weeks; Denville Police worked 24/7 to ensure safety. Soon, signs were up on storefronts proclaiming: “Denville is Up and Running.” It was community spirit and action that enabled the town to resiliently re-emerge.

Later, business leaders, with support from residents and town officials formed the Business Improvement District (BID), a non-profit entity funded by downtown property owners to promote and improve Downtown Denville. It plans and operates such events as Hop Into Denville, Summer Sidewalk Sale Days, the Denville Block Party, Denville Restaurant Week, Holiday Open House, Small Business Saturday and others. It has a dedicated group of volunteers who make Downtown Denville such a welcoming place.

Downtown Denville is undergoing significant streetscape enhancements thanks to a $615,000 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) grant and the Downtown Denville BID’s $25,000 matching grant from the Main Street New Jersey program. This is in addition to some $1.5 million in previous TAP funding for improving the downtown with new paver sidewalks, decorative street lamps and other improvements to Denville center.

Another example of township volunteerism is the highly successful Joey Bella Memorial Fund started in 1986 to raise funds for a bone marrow transplant for a youngster with acute lymphatic leukemia. Unfortunately, he passed away before the operation. The Bella family and friends created the fund to aid other parents with seriously afflicted children. The non-profit fund hosts an annual Beer, Band and Beefsteak Dinner on July 3 under the tent at Gardner Field. Volunteers and sponsors make it happen and residents flock to the field. The Fund has raised over a million dollars and helped an increasing number of parents cope with caring for a seriously ill child.

Volunteerism is a way of life in Denville.

James Prior
THANK YOU

to the many people who have gone the extra mile to make DBC’s Spring Fling a success

Senator Anthony Bucco
Mayor Thomas Andes
Councilwoman Angela Coté

Dave Sipple
Franz Fuertges
Donna Compton
Ellen Sandman

Debbie & Ken Arntzen
Maja Britton
Phyllis Carey
Tom Dean
Ruth Gimbel
Jennifer Hagenow
Vicki Harrison
Bob Ott
Sandy Schaller
Irene Stefanacci
Jerrilyn Uelen
MANY THANKS TO
Blast Lab
AND
D&M Auto Body
for their generous contributions in restoring
Denville’s iconic Flower Fountain

PRIZE DONORS

Our thanks to the many generous businesses who have contributed prizes

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