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Grants to perk up two parks

Riverside and Port Gardner groups land Starbucks' aid

By Jennifer Warnick / Herald Writer

Everett scored a double shot from Starbucks, with the Riverside and Port Gardner neighborhoods landing \$15,000 each from the company for a pair of parks projects.

The Riverside neighborhood will use the money in its ongoing effort to upgrade the eight-acre Garfield Park at 2300 Walnut St.

The Port Gardner neighborhood will use the money to build a section of walking trail as part of its rehabilitation of the Forgotten Creek ravine off Bond Street.

The company awarded 30 such \$15,000 grants for park projects in Snohomish, King and Pierce counties. This is the first year Snohomish and Pierce counties were invited to apply.

Though both Garfield Park and the Forgotten Creek Ravine are city properties, efforts to improve them are being organized largely by residents. Both are long-term projects that will take months, possibly years, to complete.

At Garfield Park, residents have enlisted the help of local schools to design galvanized-steel signs for each of the four entrances.

The 3-foot-by-4-foot panels each have a theme - sports, history, nature and play - and will be set into river rock columns.

Students from Garfield Elementary School, North Middle School and the Sno-Isle Skill Center will help design and make the park's new signs.

The neighborhood will soon put out a call for artists to work with the students and coordinate the 18-month project.

The pillars, complete with the steel panels, should be in place by fall 2006.

"It will be quite the entrance," said Katrina Lindahl, one of the organizers. "It will really say, 'Hey, welcome to Garfield Park.' It's something that's going to last forever, I think.

To find out how to get involved in your neighborhood, call the Everett Office of Neighborhoods at 425-257-8717. To find out how to pitch in at your neighborhood park, call the Everett Parks and Recreation Department at 425-257-8384.

The kids will have something to remember in the years to come."

Bob Jackson, coordinator of the Forgotten Creek project, said the money would be spent this summer on an expanse of trail.

The gravel and boardwalk trail would run through the middle of the ravine's wetlands.

Neighbors hired a professional firm to draw up an extensive plan for the ravine, which includes the walking trail, replanting native foliage and adding benches and historical markers.

Residents have spent thousands of hours sprucing up the ravine, and in some ways have only just begun, Jackson said.

It's worth it, though, he said.

"Oh, very much so," Jackson said. "I was down there last night about sunset and saw a great blue heron coast in there and land in a tree for the night. It's a piece of woods that's worth saving."

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