



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**TRILLIUM GARDEN CLUB ADDS BEAUTY TO SCL**

*Sharpsburg Summer Nature Series Part III*

**SHARPSBURG, PA** – Sharpsburg Community Library's (SCL) colorful façade is further enhanced by the selfless efforts of local volunteers known as the Trillium Garden Club (TGC).

The club, comprised of residents of the Fox Chapel Area School District and beyond, maintains the library's flowerbeds and landscaping through a well-organized revitalization plan that kicked off in April 2023.

The collaboration sparked when TGC member Mary Wilson, who also volunteers with SCL's parent branch, Cooper-Siegel Community Library (CSCL) in Fox Chapel, worked with library Office Manager Dana Zinza to address the library's overgrown outdoor spaces.

Former TGC President Rita Ruscetti said she, along with Club Advisory Member and Master Gardener Karen West, spent about one year "conceptualizing" the work to be done and developing a long-term plan for the gardens.

"Grants were acquired from local foundations, as well as from the Trillium Garden Club itself, and we were set to start. Now, two years later, under Chairperson Cornelia Harlovic, the club has a well-organized plan where members volunteer weekly to plant and maintain the garden areas," Ruscetti said. "Many members have donated much more than a day or two a week, which is so appreciated, and even some spouses have been involved, especially in the early days when the job became overwhelming. Overall, my goal of creating a community project where we as a club can give back has been met at a level much beyond my hopes."

Ruscetti, a retired Hampton Township Middle School teacher, currently resides in Harmar Township with her husband of 53 years, Frank Ruscetti, and enjoys gardening, golf, Mahjong, and spending time with her children and grandchildren. She said she's "so gratified" to see the library project's immense progress in less than three years.

"It truly has been an overall club effort. Many of us have been approached by library employees, visitors to the branch, or even passers-by on the street as we work in the beds, telling us how much they like the improvements," she said. "We even had student volunteers this year from Fox Chapel High School. They were most helpful in the spring mulching endeavors, which also helped them to acquire volunteer hours needed for graduation."

Harlovic said each year TGC's 25 members spent beautifying SCL "has been very different."

"As you know, gardens don't just appear overnight. Every year, needs and upkeep can be different. The Sharpsburg project began as a need to overhaul what was planted years prior," Harlovic said. "This third year, the front beds have become what we initially envisioned it to be and have begun to showcase

flowers and plants with seasonal changes. We are proud of our members' efforts and dedication to have taken on and continue in this community project with the library."

Following a year of weed removal, cleaning and assistance from professional landscapers, the group began transplanting salvageable perennial plants; planting bushes and new bulbs, such as red tulips, daffodils and alliums; and adding annuals, including gladiolas, vincas and zinnias, throughout summer 2024. Sharpsburg Building Products donated sandstone rock to reinforce the mulch beds. In the fall, members planted mum clusters to embrace the changing seasons.

"This year, with a continued dedication, we are experiencing a defined spring, summer and fall foliage with plants and a new beauty in all the beds," Harlovic said. "Mulch was laid four inches thick this year in the front three beds. It has helped significantly with weed prevention."

Harlovic, a Blawnox Borough resident, born to European immigrants in Australia, moved to New York City as a child and eventually settled in Pittsburgh. She graduated Fox Chapel Area High School in 1971 and the University of Pittsburgh in 1976, with degrees in special education.

A retired teacher, Harlovic has been a member of TGC since 2019 and enjoys spending time with her children and grandchildren. She said "the greatest motivator" for continued volunteerism at SCL was a complete "surprise."

"We receive ongoing praise and smiles from so many residents strolling by as we freshly mulch, plant, weed and water," she said. "Residents express their happiness in seeing a neglected area improved at their library and within their community."

To learn more about TGC and their ongoing efforts at the library and elsewhere, find them on Facebook at "Trillium Garden Club/Fox Chapel Area."

For more information about Sharpsburg Community Library, including upcoming programming, visit [www.coopersiegelcommunitylibrary.org/sharpsburg/](http://www.coopersiegelcommunitylibrary.org/sharpsburg/).

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