

**Libertytown Partners Act to
Restore Watershed Health**

**-Submitted by Kay Schultz
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Libertytown residents are committed to service and action. They are concerned about the environment and want to do their part in restoring the health of small creeks and streams. As a result, four local sponsors have participated in installing community restoration projects with the help of volunteers of all ages. The sponsors were awarded Watershed Steward signs denoting their stewardship actions beginning in November 2005 and continuing through spring, 2007. Sponsors include Liberty Village Homeowners Association, Libertytown District Park, Liberty Elementary and St. Peter the Apostle Roman Catholic Church.

Entering the front door of Liberty Elementary School, you'll see that the school is a Watershed Steward thanks to the efforts of the third grade students in Mrs. Shanholtz class and the second grade students in Mrs. Herche's class. The students were faithful stewards of the garden this spring in planting additional native plants including white wood asters, false indigo, cardinal flower, great blue lobelia, bee balm and orange coneflower.

They also pulled weeds that had gotten established in the garden – a challenging task!

And have done a lot of watering during dry spells in order to help the plants get established.

Neighborhood volunteers Dan Duncan and Steve Cassis helped install the interpretive sign in front of the garden to explain the purpose of the garden and how it works.

Another Steward in Libertytown is Libertytown District Park. The park foreman, Jason Jenkins and his crew have helped prepare for native tree and shrub planting efforts beginning last fall when they planted 83 large native trees including sugar maple, sweet gum, black gum, sassafras and tulip poplar and a dozen red twig dogwoods and continuing this spring with the planting of an additional 3,600 native tree and shrub seedlings and protecting them from deer browse with tubex tree tubes.

Liberty Village Cohousing community has been a lead sponsor of restoration projects, assisting not only with the construction, planting and maintenance of three rain gardens on their common property but also with the planting and maintenance of the projects at Liberty Elementary and St. Peter the Apostle Roman Catholic Church. Dan and Earlene Duncan and their granddaughter Kayla have been faithful volunteers. Earlene is a Master Gardener and has lead training sessions on the installation of rain gardens. Three rain

gardens have been installed on HOA property to slow down and filter run off. They all are attractive and well established, community assets in providing wildlife habitat as well as improving water quality and recharge of groundwater.

Dan Duncan, Bryan Seipp and Ron Graunke work together to get the sod cutter started to begin construction of the first Rain Garden at Liberty Village.

St. Peter the Apostle Roman Catholic Church is the fourth Libertytown Steward sponsor. Coppermine Branch, a tributary of Town Branch that flows into Linganore Creek, bisects their property. The church sponsored a native tree and shrub planting along its creek frontage. The tree planting occurred during a very rainy spell in October 2006, affecting the survival of the large trees that were planted, particularly the swamp white oak, black willow, persimmon, and hackberry. The native shrub plantings had good survival.

Volunteers Dan Duncan and Steve Cassis installed the interpretive sign for the church Buffer planting along North Street facing the planting areas.