



LOVE, HOPE, AND OPTIMISM: SUMMER STEWARDS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Shortly after the solstice, students from the Dr. E.W. Coffin School Nature Club, working side by side with and guided by City of Calgary Parks employees, learned about native biodiversity and attended to infestations by alien invasive plants and escaped ornamentals. Throughout the season, community volunteers arrived to tend these reclaimed and restored indigenous grasslands in the midst of urban encroachment, each week finding a one phase of blooms giving way to another subtle combination of colour and texture. Children from a day camp at Sir Winston Churchill Aquatic and Recreation Centre explored the natural areas. Graduate students from the University of Calgary held an Environmental Education class in the Prairie Amphitheatre, discussing ecological identity, place-based curriculum, and community engagement. Visiting scholars, graduate, and post-doctoral students in the Programming Languages and Semantics Study Group in the Computer Science Department took a break from their detailed deliberations to haul weeds, move rock, and help repair murals in the community.

Yes, there is love, hope, and optimism alive and well in Brentwood, and the late Jack Layton's dreams for making Canada a better place do indeed start with us at home and in our communities. In our small ways – whether picking up litter, pulling weeds, monitoring vandalism, noting local and migrant wildlife activity, holding garden parties, shopping at the local farmers' market, walking on Nose Hill and gathering saskatoons, sharing stories of life's joys and sorrows as we wander or weed – we celebrate our diversity and biodiversity every time we come together in the commons, for the commons.

Summer 2011 saw 11 organized community weeding bees, most followed by potluck gatherings, as well as many individual efforts. In particular we extend thanks to: Deb, Polly, Doug, Louise, Robin, Judith, Jan, Gary plus three, Marian & Mary, Madeleine, Sonia, Bonnie, Ulla, all the students and friends, including those from Russia, Spain, Bangladesh, USA, Czech Republic, or right around the corner, and many others we didn't see. Hooray for intercommunity and international friends who drop by to help out or just smile and say hello.

Thank you, all.

Environmentally yours, Polly Lee Knowlton Cockett

