

Volunteer of the Month – Mike McGarry

To tell the “Mike McGarry” story in 500 words is an impossible task, and a lot of that story is volunteering. One thing that pervades Mike’s life almost as much as “mile-a-minute” weeds in a garden is the joy of seeing things grow. “Seeing Paul & Pat O’Mara’s front yard flowers in the early 80’s inspired me,” Mike said, “to do the same at my home on Ashley St.” That eventually grew into the pocket parks on Ashley St in 2012 and then into *Hartford Blooms* today. Much of that effort is volunteer work, but all of it grows.

The same is true of his efforts at Niles Garden where he has had several plots and has overseen the Garden for Knox for the last twenty-some years.

It was at the garden where I found him working on the paths with John & Gwen, two recent Asylum Hill arrivals that he had hired to help with the work. John was spreading sawdust that Mike brought to the garden from the Fresh Start Pallet Products facility where they would otherwise have had to dispose of it. Mike has also been active in Hartford politics.



He served on City Council for two terms in the 90’s and also ran for Mayor twice. He continues to be on the Republican Town Committee and the District 2 Committee as well. He’s also responsible for much of the flowers at St Joseph Cathedral where he is the Grand Knight of the Knights of Columbus. They plant and tend most of the flowers that you see there along with many other volunteer services.

And of course the print edition of Asylum Hill News & Views got a major boost when Mike made the connection to the Hartford News weekly paper that has allowed us distribution through out the City and especially in Asylum Hill since February of 2015. When I spoke with Mike about his career in volunteerism, he couldn’t help but mention his favorite position, that of volunteer curmudgeon, something that began long before I met him and will likely be his last volunteer effort.

To see more of Mike’s efforts, and especially to sign-up for this years tours beginning June 9th go to http://hartfordblooms.gdn/PDF/2018_HartfordBloomsRegistration.pdf

Or for more information, go to <https://www.hypehartford.com/what-we-do/blog/hype-blog/2018/05/23/hartford-blooms-2018~jazz-arts-flowers>