

Volunteer of the Month - Lynn Johnson

Like many who give freely of their time and effort, Lynn Johnson likes to focus on something that can make the world a better place, has a lasting impact and where her own skills, in collaboration with others are well suited. She did this ten years ago when she got a group of volunteers together to plant six trees in the Northeast neighborhood of Hartford.

Since then, she had wanted to plant more trees and to plant them in her own neighborhood of Asylum Hill. The idea, as trees do, grew slowly. She identified her willing partner in Ron Pitz, the Executive Director of Knox Inc., the nonprofit organization responsible for most of the new trees planted in Hartford in the recent past. Next she needed a good place to plant them. That took up much of the intervening years as a suitable and willing property owner was difficult to identify.

Ron was very helpful in identifying the pear tree as the best species since they bear useful fruit, require minimal maintenance, and have the best chance of surviving as climate conditions continue to change. As they were brainstorming one day he also realized that there was a small portion of the Niles St Garden that wasn't being used as a plot, and agreed to offer that as a location. The next piece of the puzzle was the \$3000 needed to fund the planting. Lynn thought back to her earlier effort to plant 6 trees by asking friends and neighbors to help her celebrate her 60th birthday at a fundraising party. It worked then, so why not now? So on January 5th Lynn celebrated her 70th birthday with a "friends and neighbors" party at the Woodland House that included Kate Callahan, CT State Troubadour. The project was named Caritas Community Orchard, and all together they managed to raise over \$2000 toward the goal. It turns out that AHNA had received a grant from the Connecticut Valley Garden Club dedicated toward creating a new garden or landscaping project. It looks like the total needed has been raised, and the project will move forward this spring. All from a volunteer with vision and determination. Stay tuned; there'll be another party and an opportunity to join in when we get together to do the planting.

