

Sprucing up Clinton

By Philip Sean Curran
Staff Writer

If you walked by Clinton Elementary School this week, there's a good chance you noticed some new plants growing.

Thank Jeremy Moss for that. And Leah Gomberg. And other parents who picked up garden tools, removed weeds and landscaped the outside of the school over the three-day week-end.

They raised money to pay for plants supplies, collected plant donations and then got on their hands and knees to work in the dirt.

Moss, a self-described "garden fanatic," had a work belt on with tools hanging off Saturday morning. He said he planned to put to good use a mound of mulch sitting in the teachers' parking lot.

Wearing blue jeans, a sweatshirt and work gloves, Gomberg sat catcher-style with a garden tool in hand in a flower bed. She is one of the many parents active in the Parent Teacher Association, of which she is vice president.

The sight of parents volunteering is common across the district. At Columbia High School this year, parents helped clean bathrooms and paint hallways.

Like most schools in the district, Clinton is an old building. The ele-



Photo By Barbara Kokkalis

Leah Gomberg and Jeremy Moss were among several parents of Clinton Elementary School students who spent last weekend sprucing up the school grounds.

mentary school, which is home to around 480 children, was built in 1928, a fact parents only learned when they trimmed some of the ivy and saw the corner stone.

School officials have not tried to hide that their schools need work. With money sometimes earmarked for larger projects, the school district has to be selective about the projects it takes on.

But that did not stop some Clinton parents from thinking the outside of the school looked a little run-down.

Gomberg said parents "want the school to look better."

And that's just what they set out to do.

Donations of more than \$500 from the Maplewood Rotary Club and the Berkshire and Garfield Place neighborhood civic associations helped

cover the costs.

The manpower came from the dedicated parents. Three days later, the change was noticeable, showing how landscaping can make a difference.

To Moss, all the work was worth it. "It's going to benefit our children. That's the bottom line."

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