

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for 06-22-05)(Raab Park Youth Garden & Tyler Rencher)
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Eagle Scout candidate Tyler Rencher and his army of volunteers worked wonders at the Raab Park Youth Garden on Saturday June 4. His Eagle Scout Project was completed just in time for the ninth summer of activities. Tyler designed 13 raised beds, their locations and layout (with help from mom, Laura Rencher) and then mapped out and directed the building. Tyler said, "The park has meant a lot to our family. It felt good to work at a place I knew about and I knew kids and the community and Master Gardeners would benefit."

"My mom told me about the beds being needed at the park and I thought it sounded pretty good. I had to do tons of paperwork telling who I am and what my project is like and then submit it to the Eagle Committee who look over the proposal and decide if it's good or not; if it's not good then you have to think of something else. Luckily we got accepted," said Tyler.

Tyler credits his dad, Lance Rencher, with overseeing the calculations for the materials and construction of the beds. Tyler also made a paper diagram of what the beds would look like and figured out how many boards, stakes and screws were needed. "We needed a few more boxes of screws so we had to run to the store and grab some more. When we were done we had half a box of screws left," said Tyler. "We sent my brother, Kyle (also an Eagle Scout), to get the screws," said Tyler. He added, "We made the beds out of recycled plastic (composite decking) because it's safe for organic gardening. We didn't want anything that would rot or that had chemicals in it."

"I thought about 30 people at the most would show up for the project, but 38 showed up, plus lots of little children and older kids," Tyler said. Members of Poulsbo Church of Latter Day Saints made up most of the volunteers but Master Gardeners and neighbors helped out too. Mom, Laura Rencher, and one youngster weeded and replanted the newly bordered asparagus bed. Laura, whose foot is in a cast, said, "I had to volunteer somehow and weeding the bed seemed perfect for someone who has to stay off their foot."

Tyler says, "I'd recommend doing an Eagle Scout Project or just volunteering to make a park or place better. This was quite an experience and pretty fun. I learned a lot about leadership and what it's like to be in charge of a big project. It's kind of stressful at first but you get used to it. It was a "BIG" learning experience for me. I'm very glad I did it, it was definitely worth it."

Tyler explained part of the project is to get donations from the community. He received donations from Vern's Organic Topsoil, Fred Hill, Poulsbo Kiwanis, Poulsbo Rotary, Fred Hill, James Lumber and Central Market. "Everyone was so generous," said Tyler.

Laura is one of Raab Park's "Compost Queens" a group of Master Composters who conduct classes during the summer on composting. She is also a Master Gardener. Laura, Tyler, Julie and Kyle have been coming to the Youth Garden since 1998. Come join the

Rencher family and check out the new garden beds. You'll want to check out the compost demonstration area (the largest in Kitsap County) and sit in the shade at the picnic tables Kyle Rencher built for his Eagle Scout Project a few years ago.

Activities for kids start Monday June 27 from 10:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. continuing through Monday August 29, rain or shine. Every group of children must be accompanied by a supervising adult. Dress for the weather. Some activities require a one dollar fee, most are free. WSU Master Gardeners and Poulsbo Garden Club members lead the activities. If you're bringing large groups of children please call Poulsbo Parks & Recreation at 779-9898 so extra materials can be ready. The Raab Park Youth Garden is located in Poulsbo at the South end of Caldart Street.