



# PORTAGE PETUNIA PARADE

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ITS HISTORY AS WE KNOW IT

1993 – 2021 ONEKAMA, MI



# OBJECTIVES

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1

Describe the early, middle, and latter history of Portage Petunia Parade over 25 years

2

Identify the major components for getting petunias planted and removed every year

3

Provide input to the accuracy of this presentation and recognize volunteers or donors

4

State how you can participate in 25<sup>th</sup> Silver Anniversary activities



# AN IDEA

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MOVING FROM INSPIRATION TO EXECUTION

WINTER 1993





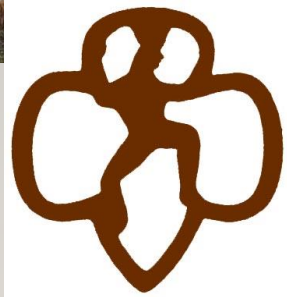
# EXPERIENCE FROM OTHER MICHIGANDERS

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# ENTHUSIASTIC FRIENDS





# HELP FROM UNEXPECTED PLACES



**Blarney Castle**  
**OIL & PROPANE**



Kaleva Norman Dickson Schools





# ISSUES TO RESOLVE

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**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

**You'll know what's below by the different flags, stakes or paint.**

-  **Red** - Electric
-  **Yellow** - Gas, oil or petroleum
-  **Orange** - Communications
-  **Blue** - Potable water
-  **Purple** - Reclaimed water, irrigation
-  **Green** - Sewer
-  **White** - Proposed excavation
-  **Pink** - Temporary survey



# IT TAKES A COMMITMENT .....

- Preparing the Soil
- Planting
- Fertilizing and Watering
- Petunias ,, the results!
- Cleaning Up
- Volunteers
- Leadership
- Organization
- Donors





# PREPARING THE SOIL

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Right amount of soil? Too much or too little? Evened out?

Soil test for nutrient deficiencies periodically

Money budgeted each year for this purpose

Here, Diane Marion is helping with soil preparation





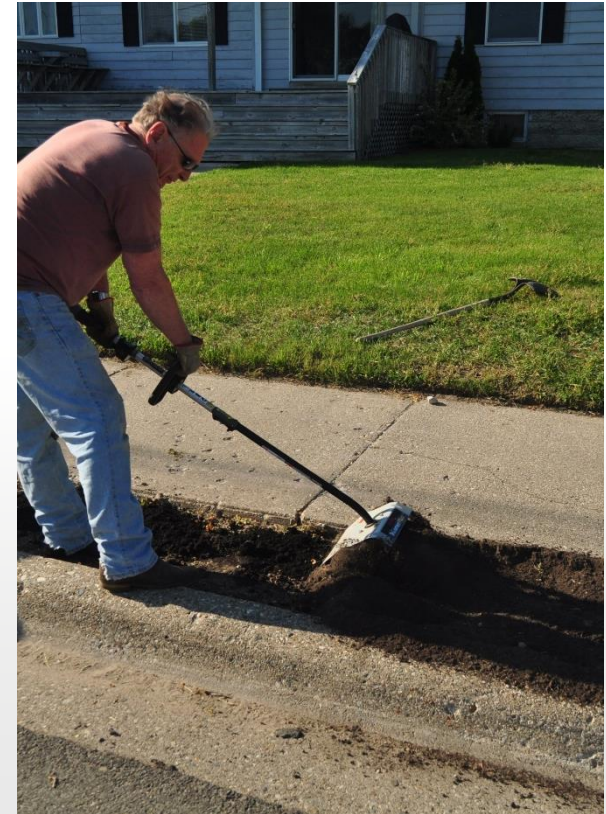
# PREPARING THE SOIL

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Soil needs to be aerated and raked

For many years volunteers provided their equipment and labor

Jim Simons here .... Many others have contributed as well





# PREPARING THE SOIL

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JIM MESSNER, JIM HEISER, JIM  
SIMONS AND JOHN READ  
SR.





# PREPARING THE SOIL

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Jim and Kay Simons





# PREPARING THE SOIL

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Jim and Tammy Messner





# PREPARING THE SOIL

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Tiller is Jim Moody





# PREPARING THE SOIL

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IT WAS QUITE A TEAM  
EFFORT!



# PREPARING THE SOIL

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Soil needs to be raked so it is level and free of lumps or large stones

Soil must be below the sidewalk and curb line to retain water

Many students provided this labor for years including Fifth Graders from Onekama Consolidated Schools

Jack Coryell & Ethan Hunt (Boy Scouts)





# PREPARING THE SOIL

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Now Larsen's Landscaping provides weed control, rototilling, and raking of all beds

Provided "in kind"

Larsen's deserves a major SHOUT OUT which saves a lot of labor



# PLANTING DAY

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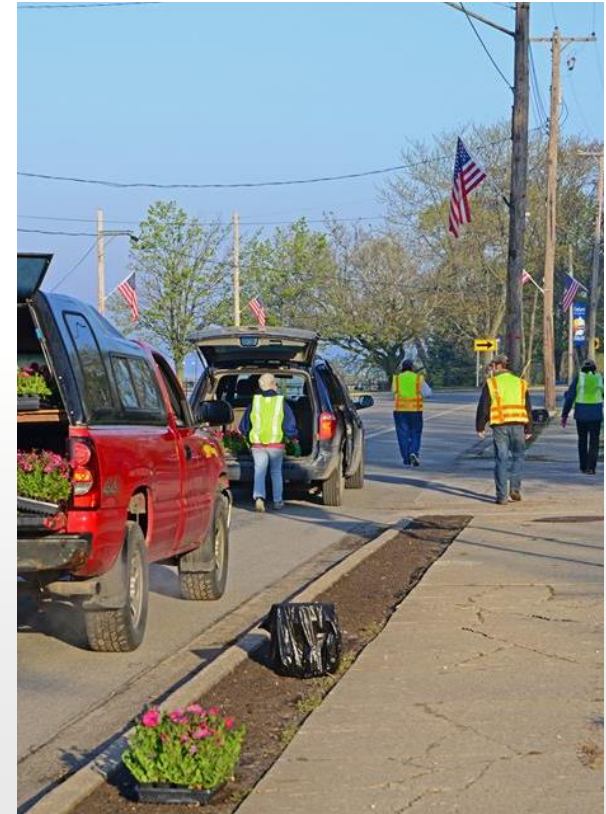
Supplies are delivered the night before to each numbered bed

50 buckets of moisture-control soil available if needed

30 planting kits (instructions, safety vest, trash bag, planting string, hole digger, granule fertilizer, measuring spoon)

One kit per bed

May 26, 2021 will be planting day this year





# PLANTING

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Pleasanton Valley Greenhouse delivery truck arrives around 7:15

Flats of petunias are placed in bed locations

30 plots and up to 17 barrels are planted in a few hours

Here are family and friends of Marilyn Acker at their plot

Jim Messner in background delivering additional soil, etc.



# PLANTING

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Lots of children have been involved over the years

Diane and John Wemlinger, Jeneanne Fitzgerald and school children meeting Pleasanton Greenhouses early on planting morning to deliver petunias to beds.





# FERTILIZING

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Need right mix of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium

Wave petunias need moderately fertile soil

Dry water-soluble fertilizer seems to work best

Soil preparation for upcoming year with addition of fertilizer in this photo



# WATERING

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Two little boys with a cup of water just won't be enough!

History of watering solutions over the decades is quite a story

Water from a creek bed .....

Stored in a watering wagon .....

Transported to the flower beds via a truck







# WATERING

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- Gamut of solutions over the years
- Individuals hauling buckets of water in their cars
- Purchased a trailer in 2003
- 1,000 gallon watering tank
- A very colorful history with lots of obstacles to overcome!
- Jim Messner standing at the watering truck

# WATERING

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Now Dave Meister, Supervisor of Onekama Township provides the watering tank and trailer

Individual businesses or government entities have taken over watering responsibility for the planters

Jim Heiser on the truck





# WEEDING

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Weed control must consider effect to the environment and Portage Lake Watershed

Turf Care Mole Man 2012 until 2016, now Larsen's Landscaping for advice

Volunteers "adopt" beds for weeding and trash removal

Here Tammy Messner pulling weeds



# PETUNIAS

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The beautiful result of mixed petunias!

Petunias are grown from seed

Putney's Greenhouses, Weesies Brothers, and Pleasanton Valley Greenhouses have provided the petunia transplants

In 2003 petunias were planted on May 21; a hard frost occurred the evenings of May 21 and 22 that killed many of them

Replacements from four local sources





# PETUNIAS

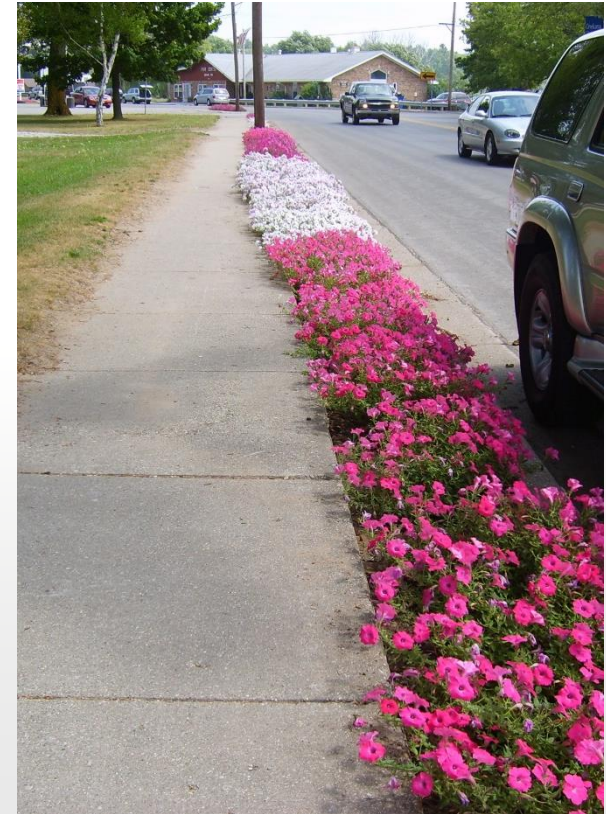
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Wave petunias and tidal wave petunias are our flowers of choice for their fast-filling capability

Wave petunias provide a thick, ground-hugging flower used in barrels or planters

Tidal wave petunias grow outward then up for a shrub-like shape on the street beds

Photo depicts a “planting by color” year



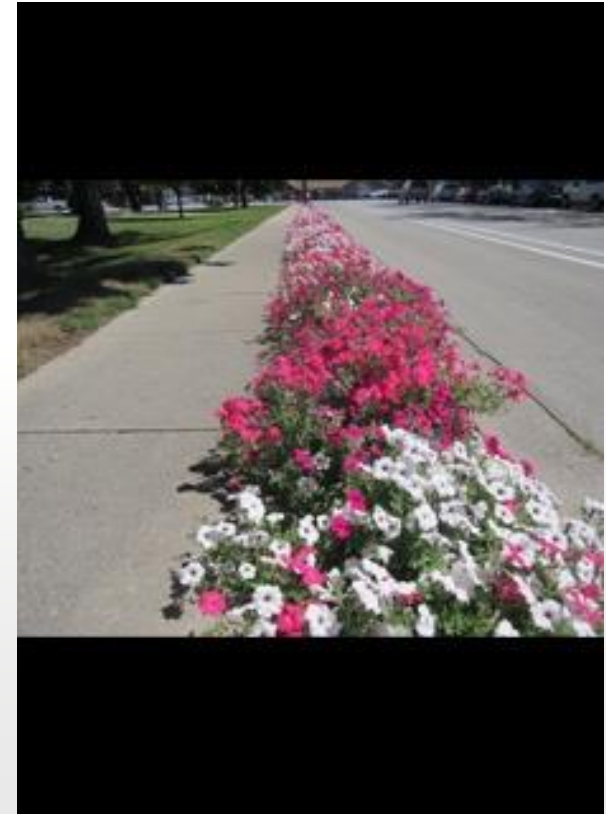
# PETUNIAS

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Tidal wave petunias are only available in four colors:  
purple, hot pink, silver, and cherry

Mixed colors make it easier to plant

Transplants are placed every ten inches





# PETUNIAS

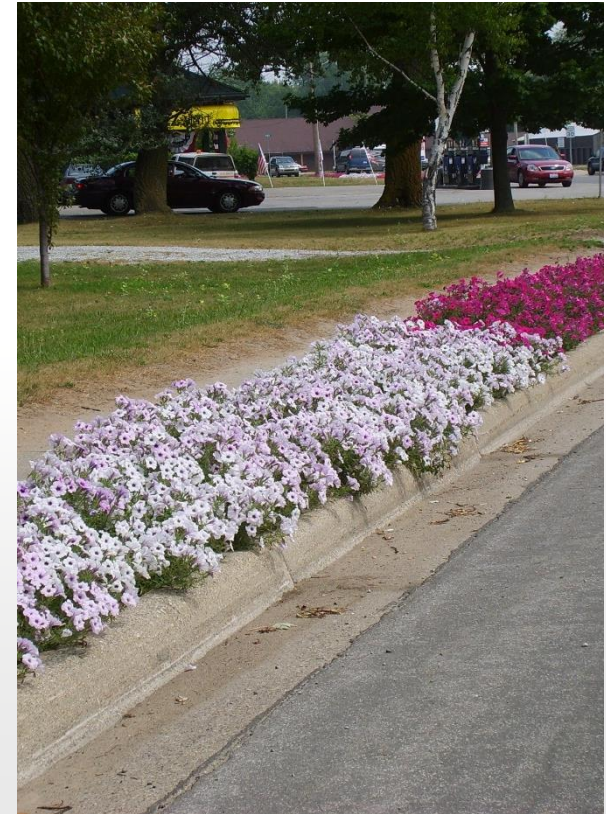
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In 2002 purchased 68 flats of petunias

In 2017 93 flats were purchased from Pleasanton Valley Greenhouses

Street beds are located on north side of M-22 between First Avenue and Eight Mile Road

This photo show another “Let’s plant by color” year



# PETUNIAS

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All-in-all, petunias are a very reliable and pretty flower!





# CONTAINERS

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Containers have run the gamut

Dan Welburn: “inherited some wooden barrels that rotted out on us”

Plastic barrels from the cherry drying plant near Benzonia

Wooden and/or plastic planters with a variety of types of flowers have been used since 2003

Planters are moved each spring and fall

Stored in privately-owned pole barn now



# CLEANING UP

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Roll-up time in the fall

Rolled up into bundles

Left for pick-up and disposal by  
Onekama Village

Here are Jim Messner, Jim Heiser &  
Jim Simons preparing for next year  
with addition of fertilizer

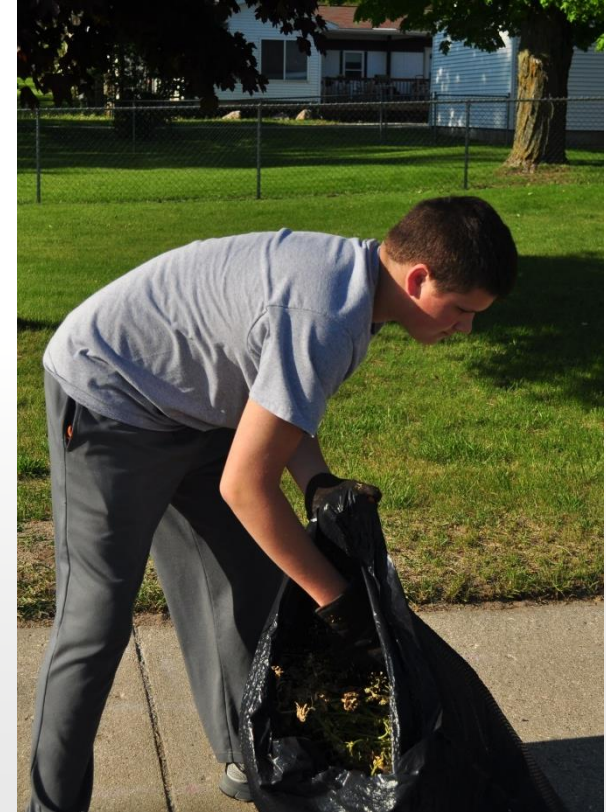




# CLEANING UP

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Boy Scout Jarrad Berard pitching in for clean up



# CLEANING UP

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Diane Marion blowing leaves and dirt for clean-up





# CLEANING UP

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Marilyn Acker using the old-fashioned broom to keep dirt in the beds



# PETUNIAS ... COMMUNITY PRIDE

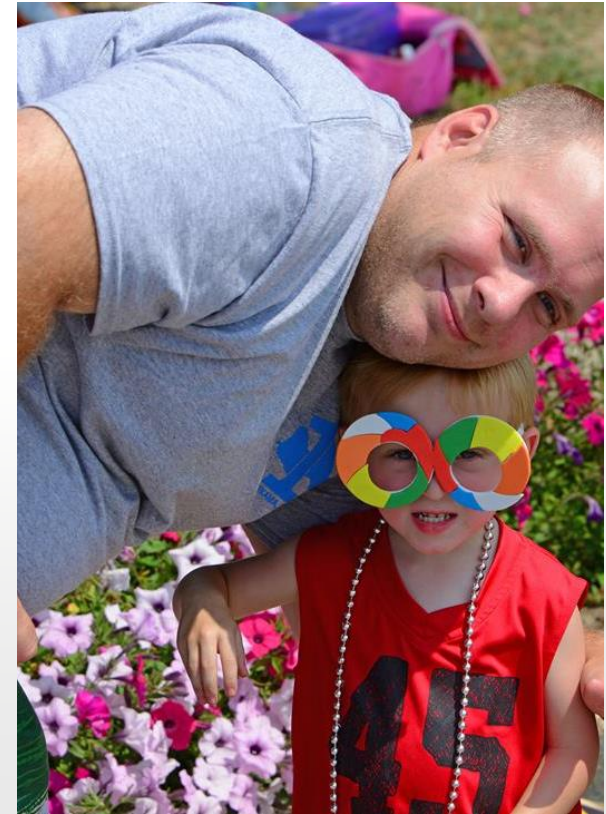
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Fun for kids (and adults!)

Interest in community

Chicagoan: “saw a Portage Lake Onekama tee-shirt –  
wow your petunias!!”

What do you think is their VALUE?





# AWARDS

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Portage Lake Garden Club leaders  
Faye Backie, Margaret Cloutier and  
Alice Mesaros presenting their  
Civic Beautification Award in 2016

Marilyn Acker, Nancy Behring, and  
Jewelee Franklin received the award  
on behalf of the Petunia Parade  
Committee



# VOLUNTEERS

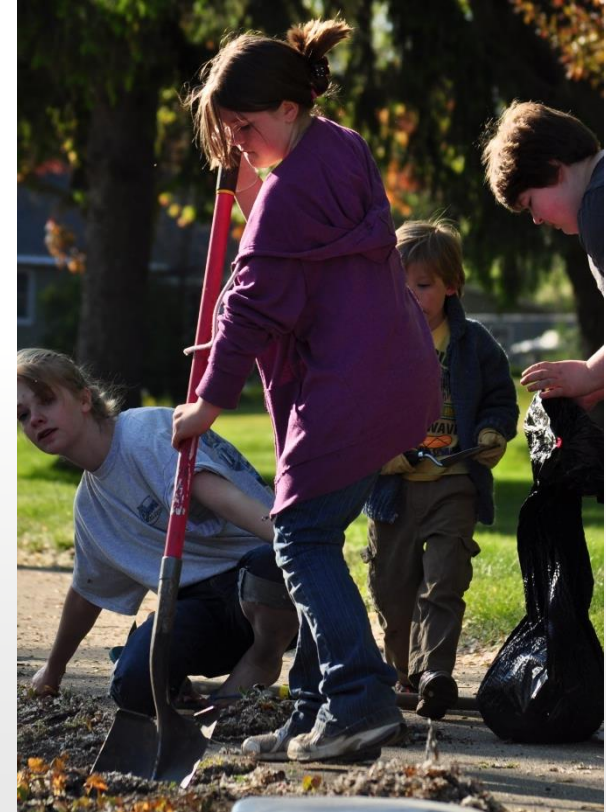
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How does this happen?

28 years of community support

Hundreds of volunteers over the years

Financial contributions (envelopes, cannisters, on-line donations)





# VOLUNTEERS

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How do we get to all ages?

Print (Manistee News Advocate, PLA newsletters)

Portage Point Summer Resort Corporation

Technology (Facebook page, [www.Onekama.info](http://www.Onekama.info))



# VOLUNTEERS

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Everyone on the committee pitches in with the hard work

Here are Carol Tamulis, a youngster, and another volunteer





# VOLUNTEERS

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Young and older on planting day





# VOLUNTEERS

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- Committee of 9 to 12 members
- Judy Blackmore a member for 25 years
- Average years of service within current committee is 13 years
- Now quantify and report the number of volunteer hours every year – averages about 1700 hours per year



# VOLUNTEERS

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DAN BEHRING WITH SOME  
YOUNG HELPERS





# VOLUNTEERS

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FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN  
HELPED OUT IN 2020 WHEN  
COVID KEPT THE CHILDREN  
OUT OF SCHOOL





# VOLUNTEERS ... APPRECIATION

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Chuck and Mary Reed manning the volunteer table on  
planting day ... traditionally on the third or fourth  
Wednesday of May



# VOLUNTEERS ... RECRUITMENT

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Tammy Messner at the Onekama Fall Festival working to attract more volunteers

Many ways to support: committee member, supporting spouse or significant other, student, teacher, planter, bed adopter, clean up, waterer, barrel mover, financial donor

THANK YOU ALL!





## COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS OVER THE YEARS

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- Dan and Polly Welburn 1993 - ??
- Reverend Tim Binkley and wife Michelle Grimm
- Connie and Dick Zimmermann
- Sue Osmus with Marilyn Acker and Kay Simons
- Tammy Messner with Marilyn Acker (pictured)
- Tammy Messner and Jon Phillips
- Jon Phillips and Mary Jo McElroy 2018
- Mary Jo McElroy and Debby Major 2021



# ORGANIZATION

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Committee of 9 to 12 people

Spreadsheet with TASKS, dates, and who is doing what

Co-chairs monitor the TO DO list to keep things on track





# COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Something to be done every month of the year

January: request for inclusion on permit from MDOT for M-22 activities

October: bid for next year sent out to greenhouses

Generally, two face-to-face meetings per year



# PROCESS IMPROVEMENT OVER THE YEARS

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- Sue Osmus took some kind of a “wheel” mechanism to measure all the plots so that we could have a pretty accurate measurement of each plot, how many to order, and how many to leave at each plot on the morning of planting.
- Creativity with watering solutions!!
- Strings with knots tied at ten-inch intervals
- Other improvements you can think of?





# HUMOR

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In 2016, plot 14 did not work out.

Would need Forensics to figure out what went wrong!

Marilyn Acker planted this and posted the sign “I’m a Lonely Little Petunia” after the children’s book by the same name.



# DONORS

- Civic organizations
- Memorials (2012 Vera Kocsis and 2016 Kim Matthews)
- Businesses
- Government entities
- Individuals

The screenshot shows a web page with a dark blue header containing navigation links: Home, Donation & Dues (highlighted in orange), Business Directory, Local Events & Information, About Onekama, and About Portage Lake. A left sidebar lists various categories: Play - Recreation, Stay - Lodging, Eat - Dining, Shop - Retail, Business & Services, Community & Non-Profits, Onekama Days, PLA Fundraisers, Local Events & Info, Regional Events, Portage Point Inn, Vacation Rental Listings, Portage Lake Watershed, Schools & Government, and Contact Us. The main content area is titled 'Make a Donation' and features a sub-header 'Donate to the Portage Lake Association'. Below this, a paragraph states: 'Make a donation to the Portage Lake Association and help support projects such as Onekama Days fireworks fund, or simply donate to our General Fund and we will'. The form includes input fields for \*First Name, \*Last Name, \*Email Address, \*Address (with sub-fields for \*Street Address and Address line 2), \*City, \*State, \*Postal / Zip Code, and a dropdown for - \*Country -.



# 25<sup>TH</sup> SILVER ANNIVERSARY ACTIVITIES

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Banners

Bed of silver wave petunias

Onekama Days events

Car Show Saturday, August 4, 2018

Parade Sunday, August 5, 2018

Refreshments at Fairgrounds after parade ends



# INCREMENTAL IMPROVEMENT: 2018

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Need for replacement of wooden barrels

Other containers and plants being considered

Used donations from Kim Matthews memorial funds for this purpose





# INCREMENTAL IMPROVEMENT: 2019

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- 17 new containers for planters
- Businesses and government entities took responsibility for watering planters
- Added mums and pumpkins in October



# INCREMENTAL IMPROVEMENT: 2020

The World Health Organization declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020

Through careful analysis of data, it was determined that petunia planting could proceed if precautions were used

The Portage Lake Garden Club provided pink hand-made masks for workers







## INCREMENTAL IMPROVEMENT: 2020

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- Contracted with Larsen's Landscaping LLC for soil remediation
- Work being completed in 2021

# INCREMENTAL IMPROVEMENT: 2020

Added planters at the US Post  
Office

Perfected pre-drilling of holes for  
transplanted petunias

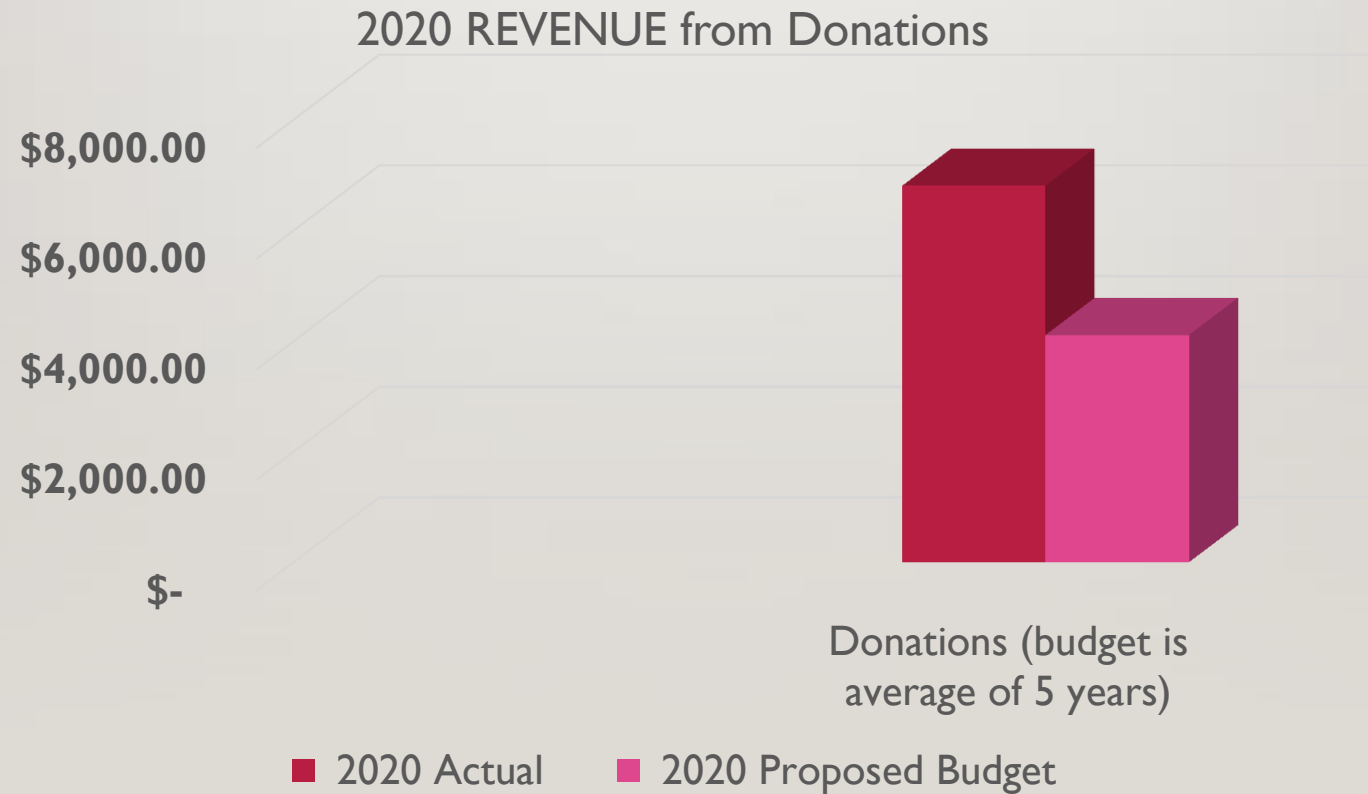
Wendell Brooks, Jim Simons, Ken  
Franklin and Jeff McClune (pictured)  
do most of the pre-drilling the day  
before planting





# 2020 ACTUAL VS. PROJECTED REVENUE FROM DONATIONS

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# 2020 ACTUAL EXPENSES

