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## **Nashua prepares for 'Pride Day' next weekend**

By *CHRIS GAROFOLO*

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NASHUA – Annual efforts to clean the Nashua Heritage Rail Trail have existed as long as the pathway itself, but this year brings a new day of service for civic-minded individuals, families and organizations from across the region.

The newly dubbed “Nashua Pride Day” will take place beginning at 10 a.m. on Saturday, April 18, and will have volunteers focus on clearing brush, debris and trash that has piled along the rail trail during the long winter months. Those attending are asked to gather at Nashua City Hall at 229 Main St. and bring rakes, shovels, gloves, heavy-duty trash bags and cleaning supplies before breaking off into roughly a dozen organized teams to clean slightly more than a mile of the trail.

“I think the best part about being able to do an event like this is that people do show up. It is a day that gives you an opportunity to feel good about working together with people that you sometimes hardly know but you share a community with,” said Paul Shea, executive director of the Great American Downtown.

Shea said about 40 people are committed to coming on April 18 and he hopes to attract another 60 to 80 people to help with the work.

“Over the last couple of years, I’ve been down on the rail with some of the same people that are interested year-after-year in coming out, and it’s a beautiful thing,” he said.

The trail, a recreation path built along an old rail bed, is used by hundreds of people in Greater Nashua daily for travel and recreation. Currently, the city is working on a connection between the trail and Mine Falls Park, and recently received a grant for a pedestrian bridge that will span the Nashua Canal.

Representatives from Rivier University, the Nashua Police Athletic League, Gate City Community Gardens, Great American Downtown and other community groups have already signed on to assist in the clean-up.

“Service days are a great way to bring neighbors together. We’ll be working alongside some great partners like GCCG, Rivier, Comcast, PAL Explorers and many more,” Nashua PAL Executive Director Shaun Nelson, said in a statement. “Efforts like this give all of us an opportunity to have a very visual impact on a great resource to our city.”

The community gardens will begin to lay the groundwork for new foraging installation that will feature herbs, blueberries and cherry trees, as well as improvements to the 12 garden beds.

Nashua's Parks and Recreation Department will provide a variety of tools and materials for the clean-up efforts and help remove the bags of trash and debris collected by volunteers over the course of the day.

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