

COMING TOGETHER

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Nostalgia inspires Girl Scout to clean up park for gold award

Savannah Lashley, of Boynton Beach, a 17-year-old senior at Spanish River High School in Boca Raton, plays flute, piccolo and mellophone in the school band and is working on fulfilling the requirements for her gold award in her Girl Scout troop #20635 in Boca Raton.

The gold award, which requires a minimum of 85 hours, must be sustainable and community oriented. It is the highest level achievement award in the Girl Scouts and challenges high school girls to change the world.

Lashley, whose 17-year-old sister, Tara, is also working on her gold award, was nostalgic for the park of her childhood, Forest Hills Park at 2500 SW Eighth St.

"I remember going there with my mom as a child and noticed that people don't go there as much anymore. The park has become rundown and I wanted to do something to fix it up," Savannah Lashley said.

With six enlisted friends, she plans to spend the next few Saturday mornings at the park cleaning graffiti and the



SAVANNAH LASHLEY

pavilion, mulching the program area, weeding and re-claying the baseball field.

The city has an adopt-a-park program and

about eight of the city parks have been adopted by residents as well as by youth leadership programs in which teens earn community service hours to maintain the parks.

Mike Simon, the Boynton Beach Community Redevelopment Agency's director of development, and his family adopted Forest Hills Park for one year, and according to Virginia Shea, of the city's Parks and Recreation Department, is grateful to have the extra hands.

"Savannah is a sweet girl and the Simons are happy for the assistance.

We're glad that she wants to adopt the park and make it her own. We think it's a great community service," Shea said.

She said the city donated paint and cleaning solutions to aid Savannah Lashley in her beautification efforts.

Her Girl Scout troop leader Karen Silverman said, "Savannah was the last one to receive approval for her project, but the furthest along, which is a testament to her dedication and motivation. She's highly motivated and did most of the work on her own."

"Because there's a leadership component to the award, it's great that she is able to mobilize others to come and help with her project," she said.

Savannah Lashley's mother, Patti, a legal mediator, said, "Savannah's very enthusiastic about helping the community. She's conscientious and goal oriented. The park is something that is near and dear to her heart. This clean-up effort will give other kids the opportunity to enjoy the park as much as she did as a child."