

Parks & Rec help war memorial get ready for Memorial Day

By **Patty-Pat Kozlowski**

To the thousands of motorists who pass by the intersection of Somerset Street and Aramingo Avenue on a daily commute, the small triangle seems just like a concrete traffic bypass. But to those in Port Richmond/Kensington, it is known as the Tezzi Reitz War Memorial.

A towering stone sits at the north end of it, etched in marble, it states: "ERECTED THROUGH THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF THE COMMANDER, OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF VFW POST 250 AND THE PUBLIC SPIRITED PEOPLE OF THE PORT RICHMOND AND KENSINGTON AREAS, IN EVIDENCE OF THOSE WHO GAVE SO MUCH TO PROTECT OUR FREEDOM AND LIBERTY. MEMORIAL DAY 1955.



On Sunday, May 18 a Boy Scout named Kevin O'Brien, in an effort to earn the distinguished Eagle Scout rank, organized a cleanup and tree planting at the Memorial with his fellow scouts, parents and employees of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation.

O'Brien is the son of Michael O'Brien, Horticulture Center Supervisor. Both father and son worked side by side along with over a dozen volunteers made up of Boy Scouts and their families and Parks & Recreation staffers on this project. Eagle

Scout is the highest [rank](#) attainable in the Boy Scouting program of the Boy Scouts of America. A Scout who attains this rank is called an *Eagle Scout* or *Eagle*. Since its introduction in 1911, the Eagle Scout rank has been earned by more than two million young men including astronaut Neil Armstrong, filmmaker Stephen Spielberg and President Gerald Ford.

The cleanup and planting was planned on a tight deadline for the Memorial Day weekend, when the Friends of Tezzi-Reitz, led by local Bill Mason who has been weeding, cleaning and caring for the Memorial, will have a prayer and Memorial Day ceremony at 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 24.

Two flowering dogwood trees were planted, as were marigolds and dusty millers in the memorial stone garden along with mulching and watering.

During the cleanup, Mason set up a canopy tent and did a coin drop with the traffic on Aramingo Avenue, selling ice cold waters for \$1 to raise funds for the upkeep of the Tezzi-Reitz Memorial. On Monday, May 19, contractors planted the remaining five trees at the site. Mason hopes to get a bench at the Memorial and host some community events this summer.

Mason has monthly cleanups and gatherings on the second Wednesday of the month from 6-8 p.m. for those wanting to get involved in the Tezzi-Reitz Memorial. A special thanks goes out to Kevin O'Brien and his family, Boy Scouts from St. Chris in Somerton, Luke Jardel and his favorite nephew/fishing buddy Devon, Erica Smith Fichman, Fran Piller of Philadelphia Parks & Recreation, friends of Tezzi-Reitz and City Councilman Mark Squilla for all being involved in this project.

