

A Garden for Lost Heroes



Above

A crushed granite gravel walkway connects the main entrance to the rest of the park. Old Castle 'Weston' modular wall stones create a border edge constraint for the gravel. The path leads back to an intimate garden and the memorial stones of the officers. A bosque of cabbage palm trees around the pergola provide filtered shade.

PHOTO: KEN SUSSMAN, ASLA; PROJECT DIRECTOR

by Ken Sussman, Florida ASLA Chapter, Tampa Bay Section Chair

In the past year the Tampa Bay community, the District Three Police Department (PD) and the community dealt with the loss of police officers Dave Curtis and Jeffrey Kocab. The officers were shot and killed June 29, 2010 when they pulled over a driver without tags.

While the media attention eased in the following months, and the rest of the world continued on with life, the officers' families and their law enforcement colleagues continued to grieve. As part of the healing, the families thought a memorial garden should be built to honor their ultimate sacrifice. Members of the Tampa Bay section of the Florida Chapter of the ASLA (FLASLA) stepped in and volunteered their services to help design and construct the garden.

In October 2011, a dedication ceremony and field day were held to complete the park and recognize all who donated their resources and time to make it a success. In attendance were Tampa's Mayor Bob Buckhorn and Police Chief Jane Casto, who expressed their

appreciation and gave thanks to everyone involved. The Tampa section of the FLASLA was singled out for their contributions, along with the PD staff and over 45 donors who graciously contributed the labor, materials and equipment to build the memorial.

The project began with the creation of several conceptual designs. The PD selected one design after an office-wide vote.

The Tampa FLASLA members prepared the construction plans and cost estimates, helped to solicit donors and met regularly with the PD. The park was finished with the help of many businesses and the community.

The garden is located on PD District 3 property. It is a place of tranquility and reflection. It features an intimate garden area where the officers' memorials reside along with a shade pergola, seating and a matching pedestrian gateway. The memorials are set on a bed of blue cobalt glass that symbolizes the thin blue line officers must walk every day to protect and serve their communities. 