

# ASBURY PARK SUN

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## ISTAR VOLUNTEER DAY IN AP OVER 60 WORK AS LANDSCAPERS & PAINTERS AT THE BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

Over 60 iStar executives and staffers recently played hookie in the midst of a busy week.

Headquartered in New York, iStar is the waterfront master developer responsible for the **The Asbury**, **Asbury Lanes**, and **Asbury Ocean Club** developments.

Donning their signature grey tees, the New York and local employees spent Wednesday morning giving the **Boys & Girls Clubs of Monmouth** [Asbury Park location] a facelift of sorts.



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Together they worked with By Design Landscape, iStar's waterfront landscape service, to pull weeds, plant mums and lay new mulch. Also on the to list was the fixing of landscaping blocks, trash removed and the razing of an old shed. Inside the Monroe Avenue nonprofit, the team painted meeting rooms, parts of the gym, corridors, game room, and the pool area.

"We're just really trying to freshen up the club for the kids," said Senior Vice President of Land and Development Brian Cheripka, who sits on the Boys and Girls Club Board of Directors. "The entire local team is here and anyone from the New York office that was not involved in a specific deal. I think we had 68 signed up and lost 11 or so this morning due to other business priorities."



Among those that rode the supersize chartered bus into town were Nina Matis, chief investment officer and vice chair, Elisha Blechner, head of iStar's asset management, and CEO Jay Sugarman.

"We always envisioned in our plans that everyone would benefit from what we are doing," Sugarman said. "We really want everyone to have a piece in the success of Asbury Park because if we succeed and nobody else does then it is not a success."

Sugarman and the team spent four hours working at the site.



"This is part of our work and it's certainly what Brian has been very focused on since he started here; how do we give back to the community, how do we help the community grow with us in the small piece that we have, which is part of a much bigger story that is going on in Asbury Park," Sugarman said. "I am very pleased to see how far this has progressed. We have a lot more work to do but the Boys and Girls club is doing amazing work and we're trying to support them in any way that we can."

In 2016, iStar helped organize a pro bono redesign of the facility's pool by American Pool. The \$45,000 project brought the pool up to operating standards and CEO Mitch Friedlander pledged to continue as needed resurfacing and equipment upgrades at no cost.



Future collaborative projects include creating a new three-story building across the street where two vacant shells now sit. The design work is being done pro bono by award winning designer Gary Handel, who designed Asbury Ocean Club. He will be tasked with designing programming space, classrooms and what will become the nonprofit organization's administrative offices. He also will redesign the existing building's façade.

"Ultimately it will open up the current administrative offices for more programming," Cheripka said. "They can do another another innovation lab, hip hop academy or that type of thing."



Soon to come will be iStars support in developing a parking lot at the rear of the property.

"It will allow them to use the pool as a source of revenue," Cheripka said. "You can't really have a bunch of busses on the street because you block the entire neighborhood and you don't to have kids milling around out front waiting to get picked up by their parents."

In the end, By Design Landscape, with offices in Lakewood and Edison, donated their time and materials for the volunteer day project. The company will continue to maintain the property periodically free of charge.



"From my perspective and the perspective of my staff, and even for the kids and families that we serve, a lot of times the aesthetics gets overlooked," Boys and Girls Club Executive Director Douglas Eagles said. "Nonprofits are chronically under resourced and our ability to have the money to invest in new plants, new paint and things like that is severely limited. Having a partner like iStar come in on their own time and their own generosity to clean up the property, it really is another opportunity for our staff and our kids to take pride in the club and what we have to offer to the community."

