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Wednesday, 16th October 2013

School children from Francis Holland School, Sloane Square, are part of the 600 pupils planting 60,000 daffodil bulbs along the Serpentine in Hyde Park as part of 'Daffodil Week'.

The children, from a wide range of London schools, are helping to restore the daffodils along Serpentine Road, which are in need of replacing.

The project is lasting all week and includes pupils from state schools: St Barnabas, Millbank and Hampden Gurney, plus Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children, as well as the girls from the independent Francis Holland School, Sloane Square, which has raised the funding for the project.

Working with the Royal Parks Foundation, Francis Holland pupils and their parents started the campaign to raise the £35,000 needed for the planting in May of this year. The fundraising efforts – which included cake sales and a sponsored run – were topped off with a sponsored 'Daffodil Walk' around the Serpentine in June.

Mrs Lucy Elphinstone, Headmistress of Francis Holland School, Sloane Square said: "Parents, pupils and friends of Francis Holland School all caught the vision of creating a legacy for London, raising £35,000 in just a few weeks of energetic fund-raising to ensure Hyde Park is once again full of daffodils, the School's emblem. We are proud to have given something back to this amazing city and to have enabled other children to learn about the wonders of nature."

Their fundraising efforts have allowed the Royal Parks Foundation to invite other schools to take part in Daffodil Week and to experience the magical educational experiences connecting children with nature, as well as creating a swathe of yellow for many years to come along the banks of the Serpentine.

Sara Lom, the founding Chief Executive of the Royal Parks Foundation, said: "It's wonderful to have so many young helpers getting stuck in to our planting programme! The children really enjoy the getting their hands dirty. For them, it's a fun day out, but it also serves a more serious purpose: it helps children understand more about their environment, it encourages them to become gardeners in the future, and it helps us in our aim of conservation in the heart of London!"

Hyde Park is known for its well-tended and colourful flowerbeds. The daffodils along the Serpentine have been dying back in recent years, which has been exacerbated by the wet summer in 2012 and cold winter in 2012/2013. This essential planting will ensure a riot of continuing colour in the Park for the Spring.

Daffodil Week is part of 'Green Fingers in the Park', a wider initiative of environmental education connecting London's school children with the city's green spaces. 40,000 bluebells were planted in Spring 2013 and next year, the Royal Parks Foundation plans to invite local school children to plant 100,000 snowdrops in Hyde Park.