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TREE TIME

A Geraldo Rivera Tree Grows in Brooklyn

By Kelly Gifford

The residents of north Brooklyn are rejoicing after their favorite tree in McCarren Park was replanted. But who was the old guy with the excellent mustache breaking the soil for their beloved spruce? It was Geraldo Rivera, TV, radio personality and incidentally, the man the tree was named after. Local environmental groups and frequent parkgoers thought the 40-foot Blue Spruce's on-againoff- again name, "Geraldo," was just a rumor.

"He was the one who planted the first one? I love that tree," Tara Deporte, executive director of the environmental non-profit Human Impacts Institute, told The Observer.

"I didn't even know he was from Brooklyn." Mr. Rivera, a Williamsburg native, paid for the tree about a decade ago to help spruce up the place. He was saddened to learn that his beloved tree had fallen during Hurricane Sandy seven months ago. Mr. Rivera vowed to come back to replace it. "It's special to do this today while President Obama is down

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