

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

**Volunteer Spotlight:  
Demetria Marsh and Nancy  
Kline, Orchid Society of West-  
ern Pennsylvania**

*By Aurora Winwood*

The Orchid Society of Western Pennsylvania (OSWP) has partnered with Phipps since its founding in 1954 and has continued to collaborate with Phipps throughout the last several decades. OSWP has aided in the revitalization, or-



ganization and stabilization of Phipps' orchid collection. At the heart of these efforts are OSWP's dedicated volunteers, who strive to advance the propagation, horticulture and preservation of orchid species and hybrids.

For OSWP volunteers Demetria Marsh and Nancy Kline, their drive to develop an orchid collection of national significance comes from the desire to share their love of orchids with others. Demetria, OSWP's first vice president, has been volunteering at Phipps since 1990, when OSWP began taking an active part in reviving Phipps' orchid collection. She is deeply proud of the work the society has done at Phipps, because she sees Phipps' success reflected on the city as a whole. "It makes Pittsburgh a more special place," she says.

Demetria also loves volunteering because it gives her the opportunity to work with Phipps' thriving Barbara Tisherman Slipper Orchid Collection. The Barbara Tisherman Slipper Orchid Collection, located in Phipps' Frank Sarris Orchid Room, is one of the world's definitive slipper orchid resources. Demetria has played an integral role in the Phipps-Orchid Society Initiative (P-OSI), which aims to develop the Barbara Tisherman Slipper Orchid Collection into a signature collection.

Nancy, who has been volunteering at Phipps for the past seven years, serves as the coordinator for all OSWP volunteers. She also leads the initiative, Pfun at Phipps, which largely works to unpack arriving orchids, repot orchids, and facilitate orchid sales following the show and at May Market. Nancy says that her favorite thing about volunteering at Phipps is that she is able to use her own skills to improve the orchid collection.

Nancy's work is very meaningful to her. She specifically enjoys when visitors share with her how impressed they are with Phipps' expansive array of orchids. Of her contributions to the success of the collection she says, "It's a source of pride." Nancy explains that many people are unaware of the amazing collection of orchids that Phipps has to offer, and so she enjoys hearing from people who discover the collection for the first time. She, like Demetria, believes that the success of Phipps' orchid collection is an asset to Pittsburgh.

Both Demetria and Nancy grow their own orchids at home, where they apply knowledge they have learned through their experiences at Phipps to improve their personal collections. Being semi-retired enables Demetria and Nancy to donate countless hours of their time to work in Phipps' Orchid Room, which they both enthusiastically agree is their favorite place.