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Making a Difference in the Community

Submitted by Siv Ricketts

Were you among the crowds who attended OMPA at Campolindo High School? If so, you may have walked along the newly repaired and installed footpath connecting the parking areas and the Soda Swim Center. The project was completed just in time for OMPA thanks to Moraga resident Devin O'Brien and a team of dedicated volunteers, including Moraga resident Cheryl Grubbs and Lafayette resident George Nickelson. O'Brien says, "The old path was pretty dangerous. A number of people had fallen and there were exposed pipes at one end which presented a real tripping hazard. It's difficult to exaggerate what an improvement this path will make."

O'Brien conceived the idea for this project after receiving \$50 on April 12 (Easter Sunday) from Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church. At the conclusion of each of two worship services that morning, 10 volunteers from each service were handed a \$50 bill for the purpose of creatively serving the community.

Projects have been as unique as the individuals who accepted the challenge. Some have been simple and sustainable, such as providing home cooked meals to neighbors experiencing hard times, while others have been one-time events or significantly more involved. Tony Gerst and son Andrew Gerst of Moraga took two boys who recently lost their father to an A's baseball game, complete with hot dogs and sodas. Moraga resident Lisa Lewis threw an impromptu appreciation party for the group of developmentally delayed young adults who regularly clean and care for Moraga Commons. Karyn Bergen of Alamo is creating awareness and fundraising for a wheelchair-equipped van for Lucas da Silva, a 5 year old Moraga resident with a rare chromosomal disorder (the only case worldwide). The Bay Area Rescue Mission in Richmond and Monument Crisis Center in Concord received donations of food and goods for their constituents. And Les Deane of Lafayette is planning a blood drive to take place on Saturday, September 26th at Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church.

While some individuals received "seed" money, the idea was to inspire everyone to open their eyes to see the abundant opportunities to make a difference in the community. You can read more about these and other projects on the Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church website: www.mvpctoday.org.

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