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Volunteers roll up their sleeves for Moraga Community Service Day project

By Vera Kochan



Moraga Community Service Day volunteers pull weeds in Camino Pablo's garden Photo Vera Kochan

Following in the footsteps of Walnut Creek and Pleasant Hill, Moraga Community Service Day Organizer and Council Member Mike McCluer felt that the town could use the same type of cleanup project that the other communities have done for nearly a decade.

After meeting with various town organizations (Rotary Club of Moraga, Moraga Valley Kiwanis, Moraga Lions Club, Moraga Garden Club, Moraga School District, Campolindo High School, Saint Mary's College, Moraga Chamber of Commerce and iKind), the ball began to roll. Banking on the fact that Moraga's residents have a history of rolling up their sleeves and pitching in, McCluer set up a website (<http://moragaserviceday.org>) with a sign-up sheet listing the various locations and descriptions of each project.

Using the motto "care, give, connect," a couple of cleanups began on Sept. 30, but the official days of the event were held on Oct. 1-2.

Volunteers had plenty of locations and projects to choose from: non-perishable food drop-off for homeless, low-income and food insecure; painting flower pots with warm messages to seniors and shut-ins; weeding, litter pickup and pruning at Camino Pablo Elementary School, Los Perales Elementary School and Rheem Elementary School; donating blood; Lady Bug Bags assembling of hygiene bags for homeless and disadvantaged women; Campolindo Sustainable Garden weeding, mulch spreading and moving pavers; Moraga Commons Park planting shade trees near the bandshell and trimming dead branches from Manzanita bushes; Residential SMC Garden weeding, and removal of shrubs and debris; SMC Legacy Garden weeding and cleanup; fire abatement trail clearing; and Stafford Road weed removal and general cleanup.

Camino Pablo mom, Amenda Kung, like many of the parents volunteering at schools stated as she pulled weeds in the over-run garden: "It's great to do community service events and just help."

Fellow CP mom, Yueyue Ning agreed that she was there to "help the children and the school." Ning's son, Tony Li (8), had every intention to help his mom pull weeds, but when he saw how arduous the task appeared to be, opted instead for litter duty elsewhere on campus.

"We had an absolutely wonderful weekend for Moraga Community Service with overwhelming community support from 460 volunteers," said McCluer. "This includes 353 people participating in 13 volunteer projects and 107 volunteers donating food - all of which helps those in need, our schools and beautifies our town. Most volunteers were families looking to help the community, involve their kids and happily volunteered their time and resources.

Hoping to make this an annual event, McCluer added, "We are extremely pleased with the community spirit to volunteer for our events which significantly exceeded all our expectations. Thank you, Moraga!"

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