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Community Cleanup Volunteers Trounce Trash

More than 50 volunteers came to Perris Sept. 19 to scoop, shovel, bag and remove trash from several locations throughout the City as part of the annual fall community cleanup.

Teenagers from area high schools—some as far away as Redlands and Lake Elsinore—formed the bulk of the cleanup crews, answering the City’s request for volunteers to make the cleanup a success. They were joined by adults wanting to help keep Perris clean, City staff members and Perris City Councilman David Starr Rabb, who has made removing blight a top personal priority.

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Perris City Councilman David Starr Rabb picks up a discarded cooler during the Sept. 19 cleanup in the City of Perris, an event that attracted more than 50 volunteers.

Rabb was delighted with the turnout.

“Young people want to get involved with whatever’s happening in this community,” he said. “They want to make a difference, to make it better. I’m excited about it.”

Rabb and a group of teens went to a field north of Ramona Expressway blighted with throwaway furniture, carpeting, coolers and piles of paper trash. They made quick work of that pile of trash and also cleaned up a nearby pile of tires.

Joel Garcia, 18, a student at Rancho Verde High School, said he took part in the cleanup because “someone has to step up and make a difference.”

“My dad says that a community is like a rose garden,” Garcia said. “There’s lots of nice flowers but also some nasty weeds that have to be pulled. We’re pulling weeds today and that makes me very happy.”



High school students load trash from a site near Highway 74 during the Sept. 19 cleanup.

Matt Campos, 16, who lives in Lake Elsinore, took a broader approach to cleaning Perris.

“Trash anywhere degrades life everywhere,” he said. “I want to live where it’s nice and clean.”

Members of the City’s Youth Advisory Committee concentrated their efforts at a vacant lot on Highway 74, a major east-west corridor through Perris. They found a wide assortment of discarded trash—everything from cell phones to yogurt cartons.



Perris City staffer Sara Cortes de-Pavón prepares to empty a wheelbarrow full of trash as part of the Sept. 19 cleanup.

Rancho Verde High School student India Rockett, 16, joined the YAC when it was first launched in 2013. Since then, she has taken part in many community projects, including previous cleanup days. It was a priority when she joined the advisory group to City administrators and elected officials. She said teen-agers welcome the chance to earn required community-service hours while helping spruce up their hometown.

“Teen-agers want to help solve problems,” Rockett said. “Trash in any city is unappealing. We get a chance to help improve our City and that’s neat.”

At 12, Lakeside Middle School student Peter Lopez was one of the youngest volunteers to turn out for the cleanup.

“The work is hard,” Peter said. “But it’s good to help the community. It’s nice to help.”



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