



Perris Press Release

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LDS Helping Hands Clean Perris Parks

Hundreds of volunteers descended on the Perris City Hall campus and several community parks over the weekend to spruce them up by applying new ground cover to play areas and a volleyball court. Volunteers from several Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints wards spent several hours improving the volleyball and play areas at Bob Foss Park at City Hall. Other volunteers gathered at as well as Metz, Skydive and Paragon parks to spread a layer of new woodchips on those playgrounds as well.

Meanwhile, another group of church volunteers fanned out through several City neighborhoods to collect bags of non-perishable food that was turned over to two food pantries—God's Helping Hand and St. James the Lesser Catholic Church.

Perris Mayor Daryl Busch and his wife, Kay, arrived at City Hall early on the morning of April 27 to thank the volunteers for their community spirit.

"We have a lot of things that make the City of Perris great and you are one of them," he told the group of adult, teen-age and pre-teen workers who grabbed shovels and rakes at Foss Field Park. "You are helping use maintain our parks and we really appreciate the efforts." The effort in Perris was repeated throughout California as part of the LDS church's statewide day of service.

George Kramer, an LDS spokesman, said the church is committed to helping local communities and wants to instill in its youth the importance of volunteering to bring about personal pride and civic improvement.

"We live here," Kramer said. "We can shovel sand and rake wood chips. Helping somebody else never gets old. You never know when the shoe could be on the other foot. When you help someone else, you help yourself."

Bishop Eric Aragon called community service "part of the learning process" the church teaches its youth, adding, "it helps them learn at a young age what is important."

"We want to teach what work really means and why it is important for the community," he said. Isaac Lyles, 15, was one of the teens who volunteered. He helped spread new woodchips on the Foss Park play area.

"If you serve your community, you make an impact," he said. "The work has been pretty easy but it's still work. I enjoy helping and making the park look a little better."

Jason Munton, 15, a freshman at Perris High School, was among those collecting canned goods for distribution to food pantries. He worked out of the LDS ward building on Mildred Street. Volunteers collected hundreds of cans of corn, beans, peas and other fruits and vegetables and scores of boxes of cereal, spaghetti and macaroni.

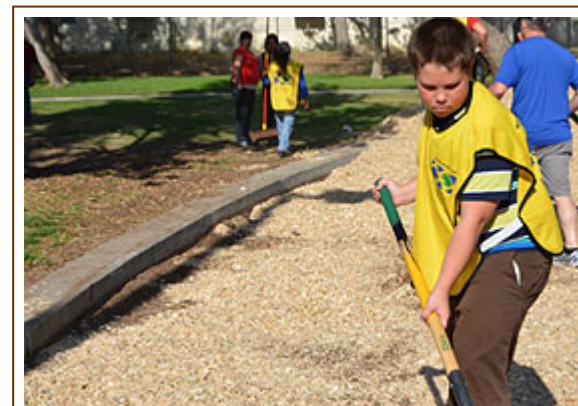
"It's nice to know that few people will be going hungry because of what we're doing," he said.

Caleb Cochran and Steve McClain are in Perris serving on two-year LDS missions and as such, are called "elders" by fellow church members. Cochran, 19, calls Denton, Texas home. McClain, 20, lives in Orem, Utah. They also helped gather and sort food for distribution.

McClain summed up his motivation for the day's work: "We're doing this to help our neighbors and show them that we really do care."



Perris Mayor Daryl Busch with Jaci Taylor, a public affairs specialist with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, chat at City Hall during last week's cleanup of several Perris parks.



Volunteer Max Martin, 12, spreads wood chips at Foss Field Park at the City Hall Campus. Max was one of about 500 volunteers who spruced up Perris parks during the LDS church's day of service.



Perris Public Works employee Jose Zelaya delivers a load of wood chips at Foss Field Park.



LDS missionaries Caleb Cochran and Steve McClain sort canned goods that will be distributed to needy Perris residents during the LDS statewide day of service.