



Perris News

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"Give a Day, Get a Day" Volunteers Spruce-up Perris

With paint and rollers, hammers and chisels, shovels and muscle power, about 60 volunteers descended on two Perris locations over the weekend to spruce them up while earning a trip to Disneyland.

The big cleanup, known as "Give a Day, Get a Day," allowed the participants to donate their time on worthwhile community projects in exchange for spending a day at the world famous theme park.

Under the supervision of Public Works employees Arturo Garcia, Juan Lemus and Mike Tanney, volunteers from 6 to 70 worked from early morning to mid-afternoon pulling weeds and painting two huge water reservoir tanks in the City's west side and renovating a hand-ball court at Paragon Park.

"What makes a City special is the spirit of its people and in Perris, we have a great spirit," said City Councilman Mark Yarbrough. "It's what sets us apart from other communities."

Several volunteers belong to the Perris Police Explorer Post 522. Post adviser Lydia Flores said the Police volunteers helped out at checkpoints, work City parades and perform a variety of tasks at headquarters. They also lean law-enforcement first-hand from riding along with sworn officers.

"We have a very good turnout," she said. "This is a great opportunity for the Explorers to give back to the community." Flores' son, Anthony Flores, didn't let a deformed right arm keep him from pitching in. He grabbed a roller and painted the water reservoir tank and joined in the cleanup.

"The community needs as much help as it can get," said Anthony, 19, who attends Mount San Jacinto College. "I can do as much as anybody. I can do more pushups than most teen-agers."

Lupe Rangel, 19, said she volunteered to work because "I want to help our community look prettier." The weather was cold, she said, but keeping busy helped warm her up.

Joel Mendoza, 18, a Rancho Verde High School senior, said he hopes other young people will emulate the spirit that drove the group to give up a Saturday to volunteer in dreary and chilly weather.

"I want to encourage other teen-agers to participate in helping Perris look better," he said. Another volunteer, Michael Hawkes, 19, said that a clean community is an inviting community.

"If the City looks bad, it doesn't send the right kind of message," said Hawkes, a member of the Police Explorers.

"For a police agency to be effective, you have to build trust with the people. If they see us out here, it tells them that we are committed to making the community a better place."

For Angie Soria, the cleanup day truly was a family affair. She came to Paragon Park to chip cracked and peeling paint at a handball court with her husband, Daniel; daughter, Vanessa, 9; son, Adrian, 5; stepson, Daniel, 18, and cousins Jose Cruz, 17, and Guadalupe Cruz, 20.

Angie Soria said hammering and chiseling coats of paint from the court was a demanding job.

"Thank God I didn't do my nails yesterday!" she said. Then she added: "This is our childrens' park. It's where they play. It makes you feel good to be able to help out. It's hard scraping off the paint but it is important to our family."

By day's end, the volunteers accomplished what they had set out to do. The water tanks were repainting with a new coat of tan paint. The hammers and chisels stripped the handball court of all the old paint. The workers earned respect from City staff.

"I am surprised they got as much done as they did," Tanney said. Added Lemus, who supervised the Paragon Park project: "They did a really good job."



Francisco Sandoval, Amanda Gonzalez and Dory Islas roll a coat of paint on the giant water tank.



Volunteers pulled and bagged weeds while painting two huge water tanks as part of Perris' community cleanup on Saturday.



Angie Soria removes peeled and crack paint from the handball court at Paragon Park.



A job well done. Volunteers completed the big job in less than a day.