



Perris News

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Mormon "Helping Hands" Beautify Patriot Park

Many hands made for quick work as dozens of volunteers planted more than 1,000 trees, shrubs and drought-resistant landscaping ground-cover plants at Patriot Park in Perris on Saturday.

The event, entitled "Mormon Helping Hands Day," drew more than 70 youngsters, teen-agers and adults from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, who dug, hoed, raked and shoveled the landscaping into place, transforming the park where hundreds of young football players learn the game every year. The effort will provide much-needed shade at the park, said Mayor Daryl Busch, while at the same time enhancing the City's ongoing efforts to "grow green."

"I am heartened by the strong turnout of volunteers for this event," Busch said. "They are helping the City a lot. They are saving us significant funds by volunteering their time. We are very proud of them."

Members of the Perris Ward, the Lake Perris Ward and the Tres Lagos Ward pitched in to make the effort a success. They provided plenty of muscle power, digging holes, dropping in trees and shrubs, laying layers of mulch and spreading dirt over the freshly-planted greenery.

While that went on, other workers began constructing seating for football fans who watched the games in the fall.

The City's landscape contractor, Bill and Dave's Landscaping, also pitched in with labor and equipment. Owner Dave Leidenfrost said the Mormon volunteers planted an assortment of flowering plants, including Japanese honeysuckle, Spanish bayonet, gold rush lantana, Virginia creeper and iceberg rose. They planted feather grass, yucca, 21 Chinese flame trees, 30 catalpas, four crepe myrtles and 5,000-square-feet of Bermuda grass. New drip irrigation also was installed.



Deputy City Manager Darren Madkin, Ron Cromar of the LDS Church and Special Districts Coordinator Allen Yun discuss the daylong tree and shrub-planting.

"This will make a huge difference," Leidenfrost said. "It makes you feel like you're in a park, not just a grass field." Mormon church volunteer Ron Cromar said volunteerism plays a big part in the LDS religion.

"We like to give service to the community," said Ron Cromar, one of the volunteers. "If we can donate our time to a worthwhile cause and help the City, that's what we want to do. We feel we are helping our community." Cromar said thousands of Mormons across California joined the effort to beautify cities and communities. Gov. Schwarzenegger and the City of Perris both issued proclamations in support of the volunteer effort.

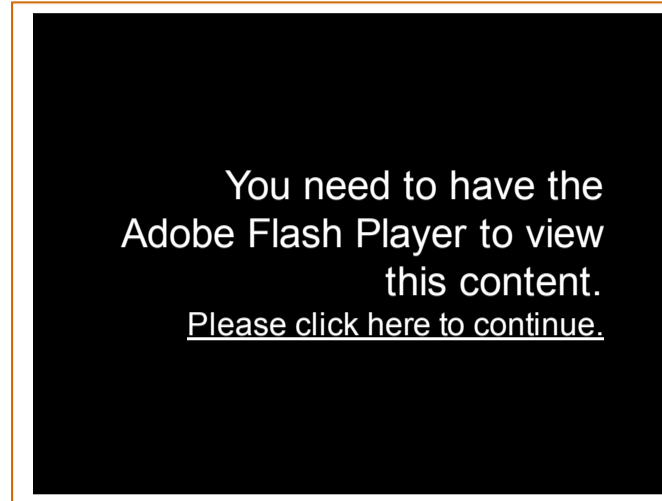
Heritage High School junior Alyssa Sperry, 16, said she hopes the spring planting will help bring Perris residents closer together.

"It's good to have the community closer together," she said. "The people out today have known each other for a long time. You get a good feeling when you help out your city. We feel we are accomplishing things."

Andre Mitchell, who organized the Perris Patriots football league, praised City officials for coordinating the greening of Patriot Park.

"This is already the best playing field around," Mitchell said. "Now, thanks to the amazing efforts of the City of Perris, it's going to be even better."

City staff helping out at the event included Deputy City Manager Darren Madkin, Administrative Assistant II Stacie Moreno, Special Districts Inspector Allen Yun and Public Works Maintenance Crew Leader Arturo Garcia.



LDS Bishop Tommy Thompson, Perris Patriots coach Hector Leon, Coach David Stone, LDS member Ron Cromar, Perris Mayor Daryl Busch, Perris Patriot league founder Andre Mitchell and LDS Bishop Brian Falk were among those who joined in to revitalize Patriot Park on May 8.



Mormon Church volunteers spread mulch at Patriot Park.