

2009 United Way Days of Caring

On Saturday, September 12 and Wednesday, September 16, more than 3,200 United Way Days of Caring volunteers became an unstoppable force for good and gathered to strengthen our community. Throughout the region men, women and children dressed in white LIVE UNITED T-shirts were cleaning, painting, building, and hosting events to help local nonprofit agencies.



The United Way Days of Caring program was established to promote the spirit and value of volunteerism, increase the awareness of local human service agencies and schools and demonstrate what people working together for the good of the community can accomplish.

This year's Days of Caring included 215 different community projects at more than 80 locations across southern Arizona. More than 100 local companies, organizations and federal agencies put together teams of volunteers dedicated to lending a hand.

At one project site, volunteers from the United Way Board of Directors and the United Way Inclusion Council joined forces with senior residents at St. Luke's Home for maintenance projects that included washing windows, repairing furniture and attending to landscaping needs. While they pruned trees and dug up weeds to get the St. Luke's grounds in good shape for the coming fall, servicemen and women from Davis Monthan tended to smoky grills and provided mouth-watering barbeque to celebrate Days of Caring volunteerism.



United Way board chairman Ron Sable was one of the volunteers at St. Luke's Home. Armed with a pair of work gloves and tools, he spent the morning trimming trees and hauling debris with the tenacity of a linebacker.

"When you support United Way, you can be sure that you will create real progress on the issues most critical to our community. This is why I give both my time as a volunteer and provide financial support," said Sable. "Through United Way, each one of us has a chance to create lasting solutions in southern Arizona."

Many other Day of Caring projects were just as meaningful, and the volunteers walked away with a sense of satisfaction knowing they had made a difference or helped brighten someone's day.

At the "Clean Lot Jack Pot," the United Way Young Leaders Society with the help of Davis Monthan, University Physicians Healthcare, Stantec, Foothills Rotary Club, Tucson Lions Club and other volunteers, worked tirelessly to clean a large vacant lot on the corner of 36th & Kino, opposite the Quincie Douglas Library. This project was requested by the Kino Youth Advisory who was concerned about the danger the vacant lot filled with crime and debris, and located between the library and a school, presents to local youth.

"It was incredible how much improvement was made in a few short hours," said volunteer Daniel Schmidt. "I feel like we made a real difference today for the safety of our community's youth."



This activity was also family-friendly. In the school across from the lot, children created ornaments for the Ben's Bell project. Ben's Bells project begun in 2003 by a Tucson couple who wanted to honor their son — who died of croup just before his third birthday — and encourage the kindness shown them in their time of loss.

"The work of 3,200 volunteers really adds up!," said Ed Parker, president and CEO of United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona. "These volunteers, like all who support United Way, have a direct positive impact on life in our community, now and in the future. This is one reason why I am so proud to call Tucson home."

People all across southern Arizona will see and feel the impact of the thousands of volunteers mobilized through the United Way Days of Caring. In total, Days of Caring volunteers logged 2,632 hours of community service on Saturday and Wednesday for more than 80 local nonprofit organizations. Thank you to all who lent a hand to help us build a better community in southern Arizona!