



It Starts With Us

Teamwork was the word of the day as members of Hettinger Branch 81 (S. Dak.) partnered with area boy scouts and junior and senior high school students. Their goal was to beautify Mirror Lake Park and get it ready for the coming summer season and the annual Fourth of July celebration.

Because the park is quite large, the group of about two dozen volunteers decided to concentrate on the entrance area. They raked leaves and picked up debris to get the park in ship shape condition. Adult volunteers marveled at the energy of their younger partners.

After hours of hard work, several garbage bags were filled and then loaded onto a trailer for disposal. But the team's camaraderie continued as they enjoyed a photo opportunity followed by a lunch of sloppy joes, chips, bars, and soda.



ACROSS GENERATIONS

On a special day of community service, youth and adults form partnerships to benefit their neighborhoods

ON MAY 7, 2005, MEMBERS of National Mutual Benefit partnered with volunteers of local community organizations to carry out JOIN HANDS DAY projects from Wisconsin to the Dakotas. Their numbers totaled over 500 adults and 300 youth.

JOIN HANDS DAY is a national day of service sponsored by America's fraternal benefit societies, the Points of Light Foundation, and the Volunteer Center National Network. The day's events bring youth and adults together to improve their neighborhoods and spark new friendships across generations.

Since youth and adults work together on an equal basis to plan, organize, and implement their projects, the partnerships serve as an important first step in bringing more young people into leadership roles.

As you browse this four-page pictorial of 2005 JOIN HANDS DAY projects, sponsored by NMB members and their community partners, don't forget to mark your calendar. Next year's JOIN HANDS DAY is scheduled for Saturday, May 6, 2006. To find out how you can participate, visit www.joinhandsday.org, call 1-877-687-1329, or send an e-mail to actioncenter@joinhandsday.org. ♦



In Madison, Wis., volunteers representing National Mutual Benefit, Catholic Order of Foresters, the Wisconsin Fraternal Congress, and the City of Madison helped members of the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County cover graffiti at the Club and on the rafters of a bridge over a bike path. A pavilion on the club grounds was also painted to match the playground equipment.



Members of Sheboygan Branch 630 and Girl Scout Troop 297 Daisies and Brownies, and students from Jefferson School, used their creative talents on JOIN HANDS DAY to make children's birthday party kits for a Sheboygan, Wis., food pantry.



Residents of Franciscan Skemp Nursing Home in Arcadia, Wis., were treated to an "Over 90 Party" by members of Mississippi Valley Branch 100 and youth from the Arcadia 4-H Club Hummingbirds and Arcadia High School.



Ranging in age from 7 to 75, volunteers from Rock Valley Branch 101 and Boy Scout Troop 108 worked side by side picking up roadside litter on a heavily traveled area of State Highway 11/81 between Brodhead and Monroe, Wis.



Madison Branch 400 members worked with youth and adults from several area organizations to sponsor a JOIN HANDS DAY skatepark competition in Verona, Wis.



Dakota Hills Assisted Living Home in Elgin, N. Dak., has a beautiful new deck due to the efforts of Mott Branch 79, Grant County FFA, and Girl Scout Troop Phelan 1100. Due to frost concerns, landscaping around the deck took place on a later date.



To help keep Lakeland School in East Troy, Wis., open to disabled children, Lake Shores Branch 247 members teamed up with the Friends of Lakeland School, UCC Youth Group, United Methodist Youth Group, East Troy City Services, and County Services to hold a School Fest fundraiser with games, refreshments, and crafts.



Volunteers from Green Bay Branch 694 and Western Village Nursing Home were involved in several projects to improve life at Western Village. They worked on landscaping in the therapeutic garden, installed a flag pole, and played games with the residents.



In a large-scale project organized in Milwaukee, Wis., Milwaukee Branch 734 joined hands with other fraternal, community organizations, and area businesses to benefit the city's youth. They produced 800 duffel bags filled with hygiene items, a journal, book, pen, address book, and stuffed animal for children going into foster care. In addition, 400 activity bags were put together for children who must wait in court during the foster care process.



Members of Northern Black Hills Branch 73 and the Spearfish Youth Soccer Association cleaned fields and worked concessions at the new Spearfish Sporting Complex in Spearfish, S. Dak.



Community youth joined Kenosha/Racine Branch 712 for a cleanup project on Vandebloom Road and County Line Road (KR) near Kansasville, Wis.



Northwoods Branch 925 and WRVM Christian Radio Station volunteers put in new pavement for their JOIN HANDS DAY project at the nonprofit radio station.