

God's Work Our Hands Sunday 2016

Thank you to all who participated in the ELCA's annual day of service this year! We distributed 72 bag lunches to the homeless in our community that contained a ham and cheese sandwich, veggies, fruit, water, a snack, and a warm pair of socks. Approximately 25 volunteers helped to assemble the lunches, and 5 of us went out to distribute them. We went to a homeless encampment off the Los Gatos Creek Trail near Del Monte Dog Park on Auzerais Ave., and to St. James Park downtown. It was humbling to see how so many in our neighborhood live, on the fringes of society, just out of sight. The people we encountered were very grateful for the food, and it helped me to realize what a great need we have here in San Jose. I know that there are many services available, but when you see how people are living, you understand that it isn't easy for them to access those services. Where do they leave their belongings when they go out and about? How can they phone someone to help? How can they get from where they are to the office where the services are offered? It was obviously a relief to many people that we showed up where they were living to offer food.

We continue to have an ongoing conversation at CGS about how we can help the homeless. While handing out food one Sunday a year is a wonderful group activity we can do, how can we have a lasting impact? Mobile showers and clothes washing? Regular food distribution? A safe place to sleep at night? Warm clothes? Sleeping bags? Please continue to pray for practical and helpful ways that CGS can positively impact the lives of our homeless neighbors. If you have ideas, start a conversation with one of your church council members!

We had another large group of people participating in a second activity. I was encouraged that we were able to partner with Boy Scout Troop 260 this year, which CGS sponsors. They joined our team at the San Jose Municipal Rose Garden to help rid the space of weeds, and to deadhead and maintain the rose bushes. This is the 3rd year we have partnered with San Jose Parks & Rec, and the work that we do helps to make our parks enjoyable and accessible for our neighbors. They appreciate our assistance and enthusiasm, and we received this thank you:

From: Tobias, Mollie

Subject: Thank You Christ the Good Shepherd Volunteers!

Dear Volunteers,

Wow! What a great group of hard workers you all are! Thank you so very much for coming out to the San Jose Municipal Rose Garden on Sunday, 9/11. Your day of service was truly a blessing for the Rose Garden! Your patience in deadheading so many rose hips and spent blooms was a tremendous help. Because of you, those roses will produce another round of beauty and splendor for the neighborhood and park users to enjoy!

I was very impressed with the work ethic of the young people! They kept busy and did not tire easily. They understood the care the roses needed and were very gentle and precise in their work. It was a joy to see such dedicated youths!

It was a truly successful day! I hope we see you all again, soon!

With gratitude,
Mollie

Looking for ways to volunteer with San Jose Parks & Rec throughout the year? Check out this website:
<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=589>

With gratitude,
Michael Flanagin
CGS Council Member