

CARP Bay Area Volunteer Services on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

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Picture with the Mayor of Oakland at the Oakland Animal Shelter (OAS) on Saturday, January 13th

"Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve." – Martin Luther King, Jr.

Every year on the third Monday of January, Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday is celebrated nationally through service projects, as a way to honor MLK Jr.'s efforts to stand up for peace and better our country. Martin Luther King, Jr. has inspired millions to go out, serve others, and lend a helping hand to our communities. This year, over 2,000 volunteers attended the Oakland service project to honor Dr. King's birthday weekend.



Volunteer Service is not just about cleaning, gardening, pulling weeds, etc., but about what we can learn about ourselves and each other. It's a time when people from many different backgrounds and beliefs gather together to help make a difference in the world, letting go of the barriers that may divide us. It's a peaceful time where we can all do something small to create a big change.



This year, we had many projects available in the Bay Area where volunteers could serve by picking up trash, re-painting old walls and gates, weeding, gardening, and more. Our two main projects were at the Rose Garden and at the Oakland Animal Shelter. At the Rose Garden, we had 60 people come from the Bay Area Family Church (BAFC). We also had Boy Scouts, High School students, CARP members, and other community members participate. We went around the gardens in small groups clearing the vines and weeds around the trees. It was tough work, but everyone remained high spirited working together.



"Our service project was at Rose Garden, and I was caught off-guard to see how many beer bottles were surrounding the tree area which we were responsible to clean. It was clear that the garden was being misused. However, while working with other volunteers, I learned that the garden was also a place used for presenting 'Mother of the Year' awards to female citizens who best embodied 'motherhood.' I felt that despite what I saw in the garden, by serving and cleaning

it, I was contributing to reviving the garden for that heavenly purpose." – J. Naito, CARP Bay Area



Group photo of the BAFC volunteers at the Oakland Rose Garden

Every year, a group goes out from the BAFC to volunteer at the Rose Garden which Oakland greatly appreciates. On Saturday, a small group of about eight of high school and CARP college students went out to the Oakland Animal Shelter to put together kennel beds for the animals in the shelter and re-painted the fading yellow gates. We also had a few others from the Oakland community and Oakland counsel join us in the service work.



"As a young college student, I am building deeper roots in my beliefs and values. [School] makes

me face polarized views in many different avenues. It is sometimes exhausting to deal with. There is so much in the world that people disagree about; however, one thing that almost everyone can come to common ground is acts of service. I was moved to see so many groups and individuals come out to simply serve the community. It gave me hope that someday we can find common ground on a bigger scale, so we can come accomplish even greater things." – E. Gordon, CARP Bay Area



The Mayor of Oakland, Libby Schaaf, visited and helped at each project. At the end of the project, we took a group picture with the mayor at the Animal Shelter. It was a successful weekend of service with many hardworking people from all over coming together to beautify our community we live in! Let's keep the spirit of serving beyond this day!