

## Las Vegas Family Church: Shine City Project at the Gilcrease Nature Sanctuary

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On February 29, 2020, Shine City Project leaped our way to Gilcrease Nature Sanctuary! Founded by Bill Gilcrease in 1979, Gilcrease Nature Sanctuary is a place for animals to be cared for while providing educational and recreational opportunities for the general public. Gilcrease Nature Sanctuary is home to more than 500 animals including parrots, chickens, goats, pigs, and other animals.

On this special Leap Day service project, Shine City Project helped to build a new sulcata tortoise habitat for Gilcrease Nature Sanctuary! Also known as African spurred tortoises, sulcata tortoises are the third-largest species of tortoises in the world. Easily growing to lengths of 24 to 30 inches and upwards and weighing 80 to 110 pounds and more, sulcatas are not to be confused with their much smaller desert tortoise counterparts. Like other turtles and tortoises, sulcatas often live to at least 70 years old and will often outlive their owners. Because of their large size and long lifespans, it is highly discouraged to own sulcatas as pets.



For the new sulcata tortoise habitat, Shine City Project was asked to help repurpose wooden pallets that would be used for the perimeter of the new enclosure. To help with the task, we had seventeen volunteers representing Shine City Project! Three of our volunteers were joining us for the first time! After receiving an orientation from Ailigh, the current director of Gilcrease Nature Sanctuary, our group started to lift and carefully position the wooden pallets into the pre-dug trenches. Once we were satisfied with the positioning and levelness of the wooden pallet, we placed rocks and shoveled dirt into the trench until the wooden pallet was able to stand in an upright position by itself. The process repeated until we were able to nearly enclose the entire perimeter of the sulcata tortoise habitat.

It was hard work carrying the heavy wooden pallets and shoveling dirt into the trenches. However, our

teamwork helped to complete the task within the two hours! It was satisfying being able to complete the task and helping to provide a new home for future sulcata tortoises! We created a structure at Gilcrease Nature Sanctuary that would be there for years! We hope to come back again and see the finished sulcata tortoise habitat and the new residents!

