

Las Vegas Family Church Shine City Project at Ahern Orchard

Ken Doo
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On September 11, 2021, Shine City Project returned to our outdoor service projects! As our first service project back outside, we volunteered for the first time at Ahern Orchard! Only a mile away from the casinos of Downtown, Ahern Orchard is located on land that once belonged to Las Vegas's earliest Korean immigrants. In the 1930s and 1940s, Korean immigrant Frank Kim and his Hispanic wife, Juanita Sanchez, owned and operated what was called the Kim Produce Farm. On their 20-acre farm, from the poor desert soil, they were able to successfully grow melons, tomatoes, and onions that supported the local community. Their son, Frank Kim, Jr., worked on the farm during his youth, and later became a well-respected member of the Las Vegas Police Department for over 30 years.



Today, this area of land has become Ahern Orchard. Breaking ground in February 2016, Ahern Orchard was started by Lloyd Benson of Ahern Rentals. Ahern Orchard currently has 3,200 plants and fruit trees which cover an area of 10 acres. Some of the fruits that can be found there include peaches, apples, European and Asian pears, figs, pomegranates, and grapes, as well as hybrids such as pluots, plumcots, apriums! All fruits that are grown at Ahern Orchard are donated to local organizations and charities supporting food-insecure families and individuals in Las Vegas.

On this Saturday morning, our Shine City Project volunteers arrived at Ahern Orchard where we met Picho and other workers. After walking around and receiving a tour through the orchard, we stopped at an open area with garden beds and learned about our tasks for the day. For this morning, our group needed to prepare the garden beds for the next planting season. We had to help mix fertilizer with the existing soil in the garden beds, level out the soil, and eventually lay out the irrigation tubes on top.

For this service project, we had twelve volunteers, including our Aunt Katherine Duncan and Rev. Ken Doo! Although it was hard work digging into the garden beds to mix the soil, we were still happy to be able to help contribute to the work of the orchard. We could see that it takes a lot of time and effort to be able to grow something from a seed to a fully mature plant or tree. Additionally, it takes even more time and effort in creating and maintaining the orchard for what it is today. Overall, we were happy that we could discover and enjoy this gem in the middle of Las Vegas, and we hope to return again someday!

