

HPHC Las Vegas Shine City Project volunteered at Ahern Orchard!

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After a morning of harvesting plums at Ahern Orchard, our Shine City Project volunteers headed to the Las Vegas Rescue Mission for dinner service on August 6, 2022! Our Shine City Project team helped to refill water pitchers and provide hot sauce for all those who came for the community meal service. Out of our seven volunteers, five had also helped out earlier at Ahern Orchard! Despite the long day of service, we continued to do our best to offer our hearts and share love to everyone who came for food at the dining hall. After the service project, as a token for our hard work for the day, our volunteers went out to enjoy some dinner and ice cream together! On August 6, 2022, Shine City Project volunteered 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 plums, pluicots, 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.

A year after our first visit, Shine City Project returned to Ahern Orchard! On this Saturday morning, our Shine City Project volunteers met with Peacho, a worker who helps oversee operations at Ahern Orchard.

Our volunteers were guided through the numerous trees and plants where eventually we reached several rows of trees that were overflowing with green, yellow, orange, and red fruits. In this section of the orchard, pluots were being grown! These small and round fruits are a hybrid between a plum and an apricot, but they are more closely similar to plums. Pluots have a smooth skin like plums, but unlike plums, the skin of a pluot is sweet rather than bitter. Pluots come in a variety of different colors, but regardless of their skin color, all pluots are sweet and delicious!



Our fourteen volunteers helped to harvest pluots from the trees! We had six volunteers who were joining us for the first time! A majority of our volunteers were participating together with family members! As we picked pluots from the trees, we inspected them for any damage, and then we placed them into bins that separated the good ones from the bad ones. Overall, it was a nice experience being outdoors and getting our hands on some fresh fruits! We even had the opportunity to try them right from the source! The orchard is such a precious gem in the middle of Las Vegas, as well as the Mojave Desert! We hope that all those who will be receiving our pluots will enjoy them!

