



KENNETH SONG/NEWS-PRESS

Tyler Nelson, left, holds a screen while Keldon Cayton pours excavated soil to be sifted for artifacts at the Presidio on Saturday.

Volunteers show they care at the Presidio

By PAUL GONZALEZ
NEWS-PRESS STAFF WRITER

More than 1,500 volunteers participated in service projects throughout Santa Barbara County during the 24th annual Day of Caring on Saturday.

The United Way Santa Barbara County-sponsored event sent volunteers to help more than 50 organizations, including schools, parks and churches.

The day started with a kickoff breakfast at the Ben Page Youth Center, then volunteers spent four hours doing everything from painting tables to gardening and other chores at their assigned organizations.

About 50 volunteers were given the task of renovation work at the Presidio for the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation.

Volunteers painted the adobe bricks on the Presidio's outer walls and did gardening and other maintenance work.

Archeologist Mike Imwalle has coordinated volunteer efforts at the Presidio for the last 10 years and says volunteers play an important role in maintaining one of Santa Barbara's most historic pieces of architecture.

"We're whitewashing the adobe walls, we sanded and painted the benches and we're doing some archeology," he said.

Volunteers excavated an area in the back of the Presidio to look for remnants of the outer defense wall foundation.

"It's a defense wall that went around the Presidio," Mr. Imwalle said. "We're going to be reconstructing it eventually."

While the ruins of the defense wall remain elusive, volunteers found a large trash pit with artifacts from the 1890s.

Roy Martinez of Santa Barbara has been a Day of Caring volunteer for the last 10 years. On Saturday he was trimming branches in the Presidio garden.

"Where I work, we always have a team that comes here, so it's nice to do community service with your colleagues."

"There's so many great and deserving non-profits in Santa Barbara and this is just one of them, so we're happy to help."

Volunteer Susan Rogers of Santa Barbara has worked the Day of Caring since 1990. She also spent much of Saturday pruning plants in the Presidio garden.

"We all need to give back to the community and this is one really great way to do that," she said. "Santa Barbara is beautiful and we're just helping make it a little more beautiful."

email: pgonzalez@newspress.com