

Northwest Michigan: starting with one hour

By Brandon Seng, Michigan Nonprofit Association



Over one thousand volunteers signed up for the 12th annual Day of Caring held by the United Way Volunteer Center of Northwest Michigan. These volunteers were matched with nearly 90 local nonprofit organizations, and accomplished tasks ranging from the full construction of a house to planting trees. This annual event convenes a powerhouse of volunteers, all dedicated to the mission of the United Way Volunteer Center, that urges community members to start by giving one hour, and help make a difference.

The 2007 Day of Caring reached out to a greater number in the community through service and completed several new projects. These new projects took volunteers into neighborhood schools where they painted and cleaned, while others collected a semi trailer load of non-perishable food items for distribution by the Northwest Michigan Food Coalition. Teams were also encouraged to pledge volunteer hours for the upcoming year.

“It was a great day, in which many in our community were served,” said Susan McQuaid, Director of the Volunteer Center of Northwest Michigan. “The day not only met community need, but provided the opportunity for future service, as 56 service projects remained unmatched. We are now outreaching to program participants, and encouraging them to take their great experiences from this day to the next quarter, where these projects will be completed.”

Service organizations, faith based organizations, schools and families all jumped at the opportunity to work in their community. Some activities were extended through the weekend, while others volunteered to serve in upcoming months and throughout the year. This flexible format will allow even those with the busiest of schedules to become active participants in their community.

“Our Day of Caring is a great way for local business to get into the community for team building exercises,” explained McQuaid. “Employees of the City of Traverse City volunteered time working at the local Boys and Girls Club, which was under construction. Their participation not only helped them build a cohesive team, but through their effort the Boys and Girls Club was able to open for business.”

For more details and photos from this great program by the United Way Volunteer Center of Northwest Michigan, visit www.startherestaynear.com.

Story provided by the Volunteer Centers of Michigan, an affiliate of the Michigan Nonprofit Association