



2,500 lend a helping hand

Companies take time to volunteer

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Nearly 2,500 volunteers in the Charlottesville area donated their time and sweat on Wednesday as they participated in the 16th annual Laurence E. Richardson United Way Day of Caring.

Some 230 projects were completed at 114 agencies and schools in Charlottesville and Albemarle, Fluvanna, Louisa and Nelson counties.

Employees from more than 70 local businesses, churches and civic organizations contributed more than 13,000 man-hours to the day's events.

"We have some amazing local employers who make this possible, giving their employees time off to do this," said Shaele Wood, the United Way-Thomas Jefferson Area's Volunteer Center director.

The Day of Caring has grown in popularity with local employers since it was established in 1992. Participating companies enter a lottery in June to determine which project they will work on.

"The hardest part is finding enough projects for all of the volunteers," Wood said.

The day started off with a 7:30 a.m. kickoff breakfast rally at Albemarle Square Shopping Center.

Project sites included Camp Holiday Trails, Piedmont Court Appointed Special Advocates, Monticello Area Community Action Agency, Cale Elementary School, Charlottesville Abundant Life Ministries, WorkSource Enterprises, the Legal Aid Justice Center and the Charlottesville/Central Virginia Chapter of Project Linus at Maple Grove Christian Church.

"Many of these projects allow organizations and schools to get things done that they haven't gotten around to yet," said Kim Connolly, the local United Way marketing and public relations director.

Around 10 a.m., a flurry of activity descended upon Cale as volunteers from the Pepsi-Cola bottling company and Building Goodness Foundation arrived to paint several outdoor wooden benches and a tri-fold screen room divider. Earlier, volunteers from Cabell Bankers Insurance did some planting, mulching and weeding in areas outside the school that were affected by recent construction.

"It's very helpful to have these people come in and do these things that might otherwise not get done," said Cale Elementary's principal, Lisa Jones.