

Around The Town

News from My Home Town Northwest

October 2023

A brief History of the My Home Town Initiative:

Successful businessman and church leader Jim Woodward wanted to find a way to give back to communities in and around the Salt Lake City area, where he resides. It all began while he and his wife Carolyn served as church leaders in England, where they learned of thousands of asylum seekers who needed help. He began looking for ways to assist them. One experience was especially transformative (when missionaries of their church met a pastor from another church who turned out to be seeking asylum). That's when the Woodwards realized how challenging it is for so many people seeking citizenship in other countries.

Ironically, when he and Carolyn returned to their home in Salt Lake City, they learned that more than 50,000 asylum-seeking, undocumented people were living in the city. *There is work to do in our own backyard*, they thought.

They started by forming The Good Samaritan Foundation, a nondenominational, non-profit organization in 2007. One year later, Jim enlisted the help of fellow businessman, Tom Lloyd, who became a partner in the venture. The project continued to grow, and the Good Samaritan Foundation began receiving grants from the government, church organizations, and other interested philanthropic entities. One of their primary goals was to help these undocumented people get an education, become citizens and find opportunities for growth. In 2016, Jim and Tom built the Rose Park Community Center on 800 West 750 North in Rose Park where residents can gather and receive guidance. Currently, the foundation pays all overhead, including a full-time staff.

In 2021 Utah residents Jeff and Julie Olsen, who spent over 25 years in New York serving their church as Jeff worked as an administrator for St. John's University, retired and moved to Rose Park, where they hoped to help enrich the

community. Soon, he was asked by Mark Durham, a leader in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints to replicate and expand My Home Town, a project the church had begun to support and fund in West Valley. One day he walked into the Rose Park Community Center, and soon after met Jim and Carolyn. Then, in January 2022 Jim was asked to become Executive Director of My Home Town. He remains the Trustee for Good Samaritan as well.

Today, under the tutelage of Jim and Carolyn, and with additional assistance from Tom Lloyd, the Olsen Family and others, both The Good Samaritan and My Home Town have helped thousands of displaced families find hope and happiness that otherwise would not have been possible. To date, more than 100 college scholarships have been awarded to students who have graduated from high school. MHT has helped beautify Rose Park through hundreds of projects, and worthwhile community programs and activities have been implemented. Most importantly, hundreds of residents have become documented citizens. And, it all began with a chance encounter in another country. Jim remains humble through it all. "It's such an honor to serve people, and we are grateful to just be a part of it," he says.

Many thanks to Jim and Carolyn Woodward for their vision and inspiration. Not many will know of their tireless dedication to helping those around them. And, that's the way they want it.



Day of Service Projects for Saturday, October 7

Since early 2023, the Day of Service committee has undertaken and completed approximately 130 projects for communities in the Rose Park area. In addition, one day each month is designated as a “Day of Service.” Neighbors bring rakes, shovels and other tools to help clean and beautify the city. Heavy equipment is often rented via funds donated to My Home Town. On Saturday, October 7, volunteers tackled 8 new projects for homeowners who were nominated and selected by fellow citizens. Following is a recap of each project:



Project #1: Yard cleanup on Irie Lane

Robin Egan and Damon Perdue headed up this project, lending a hand, along with other volunteers, to trim bushes and trees and remove junk from the front and side yards of the homeowner. Doesn't that look better?



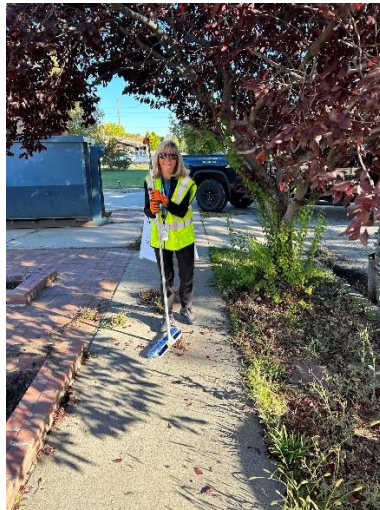
Project #2: Cavallo Drive home

A widowed homeowner who lives alone and has family living mostly out of town was the recipient of this yard beautification project, led by Tim Herzog with help from John Haynes and other hard-working volunteers. The homeowner was a willing participant in the cleanup. And very grateful.



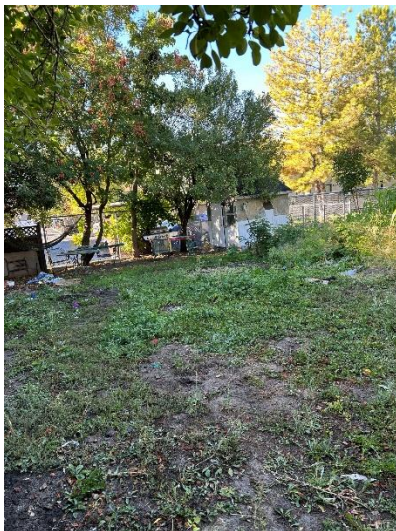
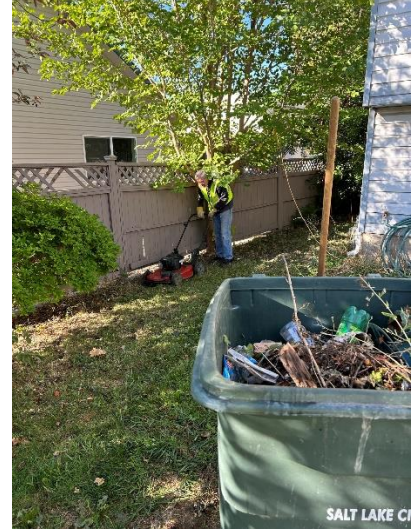
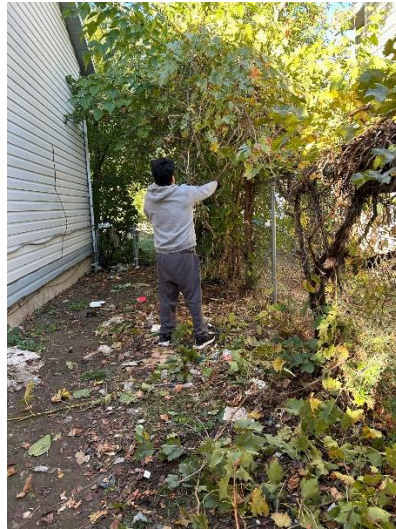
Project #3: Capistrano Drive beautification

Vietnam War veteran Gilberto Pinto, who lost his wife last year, stood almost in awe (with a cane) as a crew of devoted volunteers cleared debris, did yardwork, trimmed unwanted limbs from trees, and helped return his yard to its original beauty. A crew of nearly 20 people, led by Marsha and Jared Parker, were gratified to have been there. As a footnote, only five volunteers were originally assigned to the project, but a local church leader brought an additional 15 people to help complete the work.



Project #4: Miami Road cleanup

Alicia, a young twenty something resident of this home kept busy all morning helping volunteers, many of whom arrived at the request of a local church leader, who felt inspired to nominate this project. Alicia's mom passed away not too long ago, so the help was especially appreciated. Jose Loya headed things up with help from Liz and Preston Richards.



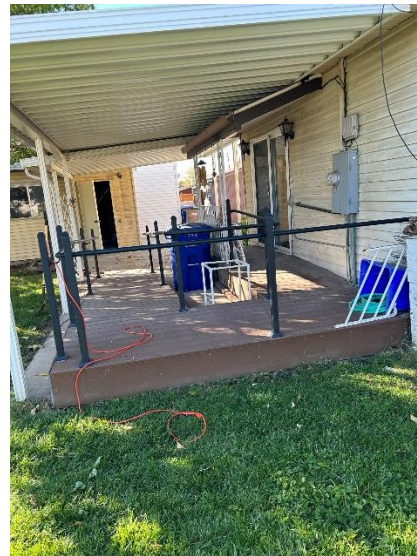
Project #5: Wanless residence on 1300 West

Members of a local church helped prepare the yard for further, needed work, and loaded a nearby dumpster with yard clippings and debris. It's a great first step, and the homeowner was very satisfied with the results so far.



Project #6: Rasmussen residence on 1300 West

A slightly disabled homeowner needed her backyard cleared of unwanted weeds and vines preventing her from planting a garden. Steve and Connie Sturzenegger and others managed to make her back yard “garden-ready” and much more attractive, too.



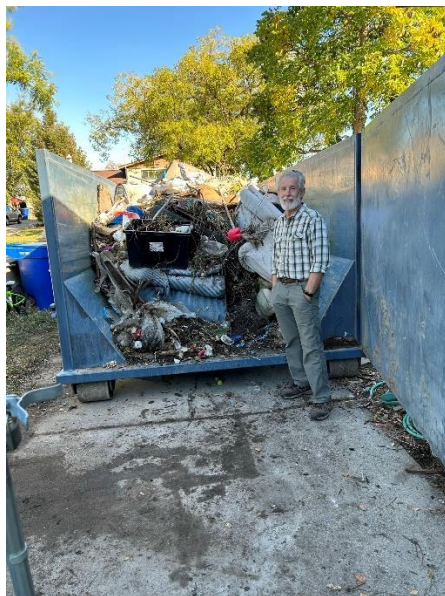
Project#7: Dupont Avenue parking strip

Mike and Jody Farley helped Duanne Grimm redo his front yard parking strip with the help of other neighbors. Duanne, who worked side by side with them to finish it said he didn't expect help unless he could find a way to help others. (Note: Mike Farley actually dug up the parking strip the night before so the project could be completed the next day).



Project #8: Sunset Drive de-cluttering project

Led by John Whittaker, volunteers helped an older man and his family clear debris from their driveway. Volunteers filled dumpsters with old furniture, steel pipes, and unwanted items that had been accumulating for years. They also helped find a buyer for an old, inoperable car parked in the driveway. The project was completed while the homeowner, a shy man who didn't want volunteers to work too hard, attended his mother's funeral.



Thanks to everyone who volunteered, team leaders who headed up each project, and especially to John and Chris Haynes who oversaw Saturday's event, with support from Liz and Preston Richards and Jose Loya. The DOS My Home Town committee members work tirelessly to affect a difference in these important communities. Special thanks to Jared and Marsha Parker, DOS Committee Chairs, for their inspired leadership.

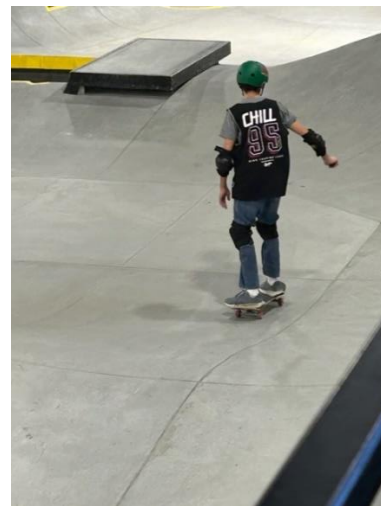
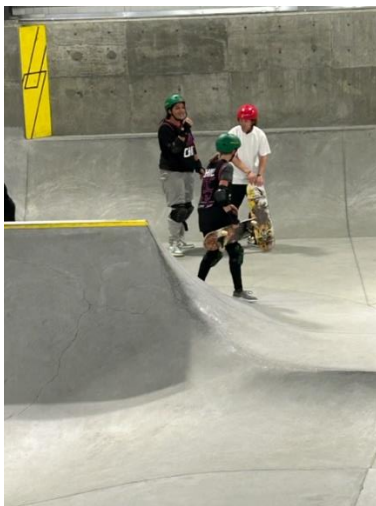
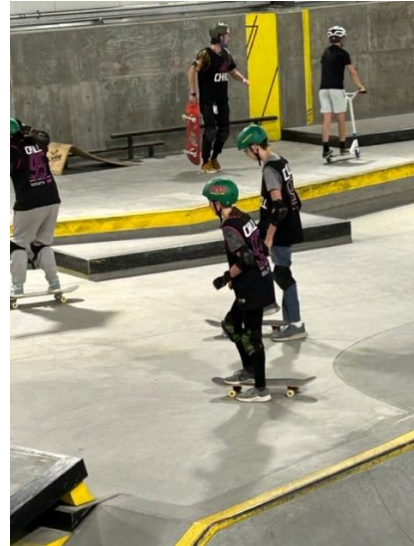
Community Resource Center Projects

The other half of the My Home Town service initiative is comprised of volunteers who serve on the Community Resource Committee. Members of this committee also volunteer for each Day of Service event while implementing new programs to further unite Rose Park area citizens. Current CRC projects include:

Teaching English as a Second Language: Classes (24 sessions over 12 weeks) are under the direction of Craig and Joan Anderson. About 20 people signed up originally, and classes continue to grow. Last week two new students from Syria joined in. The Andersons have recruited about ten teaching volunteers who rotate each week. They've even had classes in the kitchen of the CRC building!



Monthly youth activities: Doug and Becky Farly have organized a Youth Planning Committee to help plan events and unify teens from diverse cultures. To date they have held a kickoff social at the newly remodeled CRC building and a summer activity at the International Peace Gardens in Rose Park. Both events were very well attended with about 100 young men and women attending the summer party. The Farley's also planned a youth Halloween dance complete with a popular DJ. Unfortunately, that activity had to be canceled due to a conflicting youth party in the area. Recently, Doug and Becky connected area youth to "Chill," a non-profit organization that provides skateboarding and snowboarding lessons along with seminars on life lessons for the youth.



Sports Programs: Under the direction of John and Lisia Satini, the Jayhawks basketball program for youth continues twice weekly at the CRC building. Futsal, the indoor soccer program, has also been added to the calendar every Tuesday night.



“Pictures with Santa” is scheduled for December under the direction of Kendrick and Kris Bytheway. The Bytheway’s are busy exploring another sewing class as well as additional activities for area residents, including another Family Portrait Day, which will occur early next year.



Backman Elementary School programs: Liz and Gaylen Zentner and others have dedicated countless hours to helping teachers and students on many fronts. A tutoring pool of volunteers has been established to help raise school reading scores. Lunches and dinners, under the direction of Connie and Steve Sturzenegger, have been provided to school teachers and administrators, who currently don't have the benefit of a PTA program. Liz Zentner and her team also organized a Backman Elementary School Carnival last spring that was highly successful, despite a torrential downpour. Liz has volunteered to serve as acting PTA president at Backman. In addition, Liz and Gaylen will be expanding our school outreach as the Social Relations/Children's Literacy leaders, helping fulfill PTA needs and enlisting parents to assist with reading and math and other school subjects in schools throughout the area.



Thanks to Dirk and Lisa Anjewierden for their guidance and leadership of the Community Resource Center. They work hard each day to strengthen relationships with the Rose Park community as they and their committee help create new activities to unite fellow citizens.





