

# Around The Town

## News from My Hometown Northwest

### Special Edition

August 2025

#### DOS Committee “Junk Jamboree” unites Rose Park area communities.

August is one of the more difficult months for the MHT Day of Service Committee. It’s hot. Often windy. People are traveling. Getting those last vacation days in before school starts. So, when Mike and Jody Farley took on the August 9th DOS project, they decided they needed something which might really stimulate neighborhoods and fellow MHT volunteers. After weeks of brainstorming and researching options in April, they landed on something they hoped would do the trick. They called it “Junk Jamboree,” and it involved dumpsters and a whole lot of work.

They began by asking some questions: What if My Hometown had a “dumpster day” and could procure a dozen or so dumpsters, positioning them in needed areas? What if they could get the attention of neighbors, community leaders, surrounding churches and dedicate a day to a major cleanup project? And then, what if they could provide a celebratory home cooked luncheon for volunteers and recipients following the day’s work?

Yes, it was ambitious (and potentially expensive), but it worked. Perfectly. Here is a summary of what went down (or perhaps we should say “went away”).

#### Charitable Support became a vital component of the project.

Luckily, Jody had been nurturing a relationship for over a year with Asilia Charities, a local non-profit organization intent on helping communities in low-income areas. Asilia’s mission statement parallels My Home Town’s agenda, and Jody’s contact, Kortney Gong could see the similarities. Still, when Jody approached Kortney (rather hesitantly) about having them rent over a dozen dumpsters (“not inexpensive” she says) for the day, she quickly agreed, and thus a new partnership was formed.

Asilia's generosity made it possible for My Hometown to apply their budget to feeding volunteers (about 300 showed up)—thanks to an extensive publicity campaign throughout the city. Many of the participants came from neighbors as well as surrounding LDS churches: The Meadow Ward, Northstar Ward and the Center Third Ward. In addition, MHT was able to purchase two bounce houses for the kids to go along with a delicious street taco menu after the day's work was done. The bounce houses will easily pay for themselves as future projects are determined.



## How a dozen dumpsters lifted a community

They key to the success for this day was the twelve thirty-foot dumpsters, each capable of holding 3-5 tons of debris, which were filled to overflowing. Carefully positioned throughout neighborhoods in needed areas, they made it possible to triple the workload over the four primary projects scheduled for this Day of Service. Jody Farley said she “never thought dumpsters could bring a community together like this.” Hubby, Mike concurred: “This exceeded all our expectations and hopes for the day.”

In addition, a U-Haul Truck was placed near the Center Third Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and it was soon full of “useful” donated items for the Deseret Industries.

You might say the day became something more than envisioned, more like “the mother of all service days.” My Hometown Northwest Co-Director, Marsha Parker described it as “magical.”



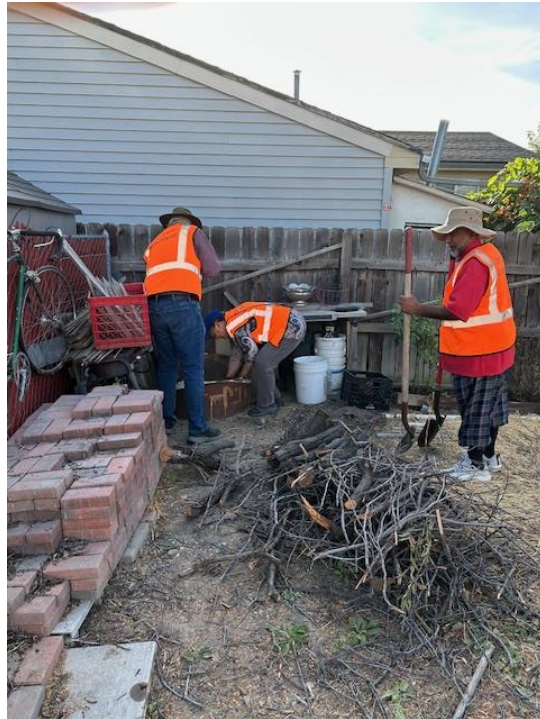


Here's a closer look at the four primary DOS projects:

Project #1: John and Diane Whittaker headed up this project, which required hours of dedicated work to help a woman empty out an accumulation of unwanted things. The dumpster was filled, and when all was said and done, a happy homeowner thanked volunteers for giving her a new outlook on things, including, as she said, "life itself."



Project #2: Jeff and Julie Olson, co-founders of My Hometown, spent hours working with the homeowner and volunteers to help beautify things. Neighbors took the lead early on, helping cut trees while getting the yard and house ready. On the Day of Service, work included removing a boiler that had become a liability, not an asset. Mike Farley also helped prepare things by cutting tree stumps into logs. Work crews filled the dumpster. And then some. What a difference a day makes (or days and days in this case), right?



Project #3: A squad of volunteers, including some dedicated young men who were happy to help spruce things up at this home, made it look almost brand new. Tim Herzog oversaw things for the happy homeowners, who chipped in by purchasing their own dumpster for the day. See below.



Bonus project #4: Doug and Julie Stephens spearheaded things on this late addition to the day's workload. Turns out the homeowner was very committed to doing the work himself, at one point saying "you've taught me how to do this -- I'll supply the labor. But can you just help with the dumpster?" Willing hands make a difference. And, so does a well-placed dumpster.



Now that the work is finished, “Let’s eat.”

It’s not easy planning lunch when you’re not sure what the guest list will look like. So, the MHT team made sure there was enough food for everyone. And, everyone turned out to be about 300 tired but proud volunteers and homeowners who enjoyed Street Tacos (with all the toppings and side dishes you could imagine) at the Meadow Ward (LDS Church). Just so you know it took additional volunteers to prepare, cook and serve the project volunteers, requiring extra grills, tents, and supplies. No easy task. But the lunch served two purposes: feeding hungry participants, and more importantly providing a platform for communication and togetherness. Again, Neighbors Helping Neighbors.



Heartwarming happenings gave the event more texture.

Some special experiences, now memories, helped define what a “magical” day this was:

One of the volunteers who helped cook and serve lunch was seen leaving the park on his bicycle, proudly wearing his badge of honor: an MHT Cook’s Apron. Someone said you could see him grinning a block away.

A member of the My Hometown DOS committee received a “shout out” in church when they attended services the next day. Albeit slightly inappropriate for the setting, the gesture received some well-earned smiles and “thumbs up” from the congregation.

One volunteer whose truck window had been broken luckily found an exact replacement in a dumpster. Beyond lucky, said someone.

And, finally, two parents looking for bicycles for their daughters found just what they wanted in the back of the U Haul truck. And, just in time. Surprisingly, two “pink” bikes were spotted just as the vehicle started pulling out. Jody said it was worth it “just watching the smiles on these parent’s faces.”



Let's call it a wrap:

Thanks to Jody and Mike Farley and to all who dedicated hours upon hours of planning and implementation to make this day what it was: Extremely successful, and perhaps even more importantly, uniting. One volunteer may have best summed it up: "I didn't lose any weight today, but I sure feel lighter."

Special thanks goes to nonprofit organization Asilia Charities and to Executive Director Kortney Gong, who took a chance on this ambitious project. "We're tickled with the results" says Kortney. "This is what we are all about - making a difference when and where we're needed." Jody added, "this is a partnership we cherish. We could not have accomplished this much and made this day so special without their support."

"We see momentum," said MHT co-founder Jeff Olson, "and it's very rewarding to see how our partnerships throughout the city are growing." Marylee Bingham, Director of the MHT CRC Committee added, "these work projects are contagious. Inquisitive neighbors and bystanders not only express appreciation but start to get involved."



Mike and Jody Farley of My Hometown Northwest