

Larimer County deserves a pat on the back

GORDAN THIBEDEAU • MARCH 15, 2010 • FOR THE FORT COLLINS COLORADOAN

I was pleased recently to have someone stop me on the street and congratulate me on having United Way of Larimer County's Volunteer Center be recognized for hosting one of the 10 most outstanding 'Make a Difference Day' events in the nation.

The Volunteer Center team is dedicated and committed to making a difference in our community and gives 100 percent day in and day out.

As I thought about the congratulations, I realized that actually the honor goes to you, all 4,450 of you who gave of your time and talent to make our community a better place.

You supported more than 150 projects with more than 17,580 hours which helped 75 organizations and thousands of individuals. Equally impressive is the fact that 1,900 of you are students who volunteered through classroom projects and student groups.

I want to share with you a few examples of the remarkable impact you provided.

1. Business community volunteers shared an afternoon with the residents of Sanctuary Apartments, an elderly living facility, by baking and decorating cookies. Sharing stories and time with these folks means so much.
2. VRF Design, a local business, partnered with a local no-kill animal shelter, Animal House, to design and construct benches, storage facilities and a drainage system for the cats and dogs that reside at the shelter until they are adopted.
3. More than 100 Intel employees volunteered at High Plains Environmental Center by designing and constructing floating flora habitats, gleaning gardens and preparing trees and plants for the winter season. Food that was harvested during this project was donated to the local food bank.
4. Fossil Ridge High School students worked together to knit new hats and scarves. These items were donated to the homeless community in Fort Collins.
5. Students from Johnson Elementary School visited nursing homes and assisted living facilities to meet residents, share stories and played the part of grandchildren for the day.

These examples barely scratch the surface of all the activities accomplished by you. Thank you and congratulations Larimer County, you deserve it.

Gordan Thibedeau is president and CEO of United Way of Larimer County. Reach him at (970) 407-7000. Visit United Way of Larimer County at www.uwaylc.org.