

Publish Date: 11/21/2009

United Way announces record numbers

Loveland volunteers turn out in droves

*By Sarah Bultema
Loveland Reporter-Herald*

A record number of community members — thousands of them — donated their time to volunteer last month during the local United Way's annual Make a Difference Day event.

More than 4,400 Larimer County residents helped complete more than 150 volunteer projects during the six-day event, making it the largest volunteer event in the state.

“We're thrilled,” said Adam Molzer, volunteer center director of the United Way of Larimer County. “It was a good year.”

The national event — which has been expanded locally to one week — called on community members to lend a hand and help agencies, nonprofits and those in need during the week of Oct. 19.

Volunteers, who ranged from youths to business groups, gave their time to complete projects such as painting buildings and harvesting vegetables.

Last year, about 3,500 people volunteered — but this year's participation increased by nearly 1,000 community members.

“I think people are definitely recognizing the need to engage in their community,” said Molzer, who noted there has been a recent upswing in volunteerism across the board.

Yet community members have always made giving a priority, he added.

“It's part of our culture here in Northern Colorado to be involved and give back and meet critical community needs,” Molzer said.

And all the hard work paid off.

With each hour of volunteering worth about \$20 per person, the event brought more than \$350,000 in benefits to the community, Molzer said.

For those volunteering, the effort could be priceless, he added.

“It brought into people’s perspective critical issues being addressed right here in Larimer County,” Molzer said. “The hope is (participants) will continue to support those organizations as ongoing volunteers.”

The United Way of Larimer County coordinates volunteer projects year-round. To find opportunities or to get involved with next year’s event, visit www.uwaylc.org.