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For Immediate Release



## Nearly 5,000 United Way/CFC Day of Caring Volunteers Roll-Up Their Sleeves to Lend a Hand

Normally, Sherwood Center for the Exceptional Child has a maintenance staff of one. Lyle, takes care of cleaning and maintenance at the Kansas City school for children with autism and related disabilities. On this particular Saturday, Lyle found himself with a staff 112 people but they never ran out of things to do.

The expanded Sherwood Center maintenance staff included employees of the Social Security Administration who selected Sherwood Center as their Day of Caring project this year. They painted, removed bushes, deep-cleaned classrooms, pulled weeds from the playground, installed Plexiglas in the doors and even painted a mural on the hallway wall. For some of the Day of Caring volunteers like Gabe Hill of Raytown and Lynn Marten of Lenexa, it was something they've done before. For others, like Randy Pierce of Kansas City, this was their first experience as Day of Caring volunteers.

Similar efforts were happening all over the metro area as 4,885 Day of Caring volunteers tackled 187 projects throughout the community. While many involved fixing and cleaning, others involved spending time with children, seniors and disabled clients of Kansas City area nonprofit agencies.

KPMG employees took advantage of the nice weather, hosting a picnic for children involved with Big Brothers Big Sisters. The barbecue at Harmon Park in Prairie Village, KS, included a three legged race, water balloon toss, a moon walk and dodge ball. The KPMG volunteers all agreed this volunteer assignment was much easier than their Day of Caring project two years ago when they cleaned the stables at a therapeutic horseback riding program.

In another part of town, GSA employees were having a blast doing hair styling, makeup and manicures for female residents of two UCP group homes. For some of the girls, it was the first time they'd ever had a manicure and they loved it.

While some projects were aimed at lifting the spirits of people who were sad or lonely, others involved physical work to help seniors and those with disabilities. Seventy-six-year-old Bessie Painter has been a widow for 35 years and has no relatives in town. She uses a walker and depends on meals on wheels from Don Bosco Center. She fought back tears as she watched more than a dozen volunteers from Butler Manufacturing cut her grass, remove weeds, plant flowers and clean up her yard. She was amazed that so many strangers were willing to give up part of their Saturday, to help her.

Mother Nature cooperated to make the 13<sup>th</sup> annual United Way/CFC Day of Caring a huge success. Dry weather and temperatures in the mid 80's were perfect for painting, landscaping, pouring concrete, picnics, fishing trips and just getting outdoors. In the end, nearly 5,000 Day of Caring volunteers got a chance to make new friends, learn a little more about their community and walk away with the satisfaction of knowing they made a difference in someone's life today.

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