

Day of Sharing and Caring April 22, 2019

Prepared by Ken Carpenter, Jubilee REACH Program Manager, describing some of the work accomplished by Jubilee REACH through the Day of Sharing and Caring program¹:

The commitment of volunteer groups, allows people who may be otherwise lonely and isolated, to receive help and to know that someone cares. It is amazing to hear conversations break out with stories and laughter, where people become friends and feel loved in a short amount of time.

1. Margaret is an 82-year-old widow and lives near Bellevue College. Her backyard is a rocky hillside which was overgrown with weeds and black berries. The southern wall of her rambler had paint peeling. The crew cleared the hillside, filling a trailer of yard waste, as well as scraped, primed and painted the wall. Margaret was overjoyed for the help and share some spirited conversation with the crew all morning.

2. Mika is an 80-year-old widow and lives near Phantom Lake. She keeps a nice garden, but there was a lot of work she no longer can do. The crew trimmed many trees & bushes, cut low limbs, pulled out grape vines growing in from the neighbor's yard and did some weeding. Mika was surprised to see "so many young people" and shared how she rarely meets people in this age group. When we said goodbye, she was overcome with emotion and cried tears of thankful joy.

3. Juanita is a 101-year-old widow who lives near Phantom Lake with her grown son, Carl, as caregiver. The crew cleaned their roof & gutters, as well as power washed the driveway. The yard received a general cleaning, including the trimming of many bushes, the removal of a dying lilac tree and cutting of low tree branches. Unable to do this work themselves, Carl was very grateful for the help.

4. Steven is an 82-year-old widower who lives in NE Bellevue. He walks with a cane and can no longer do heavy yard work. The crew cleaned out the entire overgrown back yard, including many blackberries, fallen branches, low limbs and overgrown bushes. The waste filled ½ of a 30-yard dumpster the city provided for disposal. Sitting in a chair for a group picture, Steven was overcome with emotion as he expressed his thanks and appreciation.

5. Anna is 92 years old and lives in NE Bellevue with her daughter. Originally from Latvia, she has a very nice garden, but it was overgrown, especially a very large laurel hedge. The crew completely trimmed the hedge, along with many other bushes and trees. Fallen branches and tree debris was raked and cleared. A trailer full of debris was taken down the street to fill the other ½ of the 30-yard dumpster. Anna expressed how wonderful it was to have young people around.

6. John is a 72-year-old and lives in NE Bellevue. Originally from Iran, he had polio as a child, so walks with a cane. He cannot care for his yard himself. The crew trimmed many bushes, cleaned his roof & gutters, mowed his lawn and raked the yard. John expressed sincere appreciation for the assistance of doing what he cannot.

¹ Names of residents served have been changed.

7. Henrietta is a 98-year-old widow in NE Bellevue who lives by herself. Her garden is lovely, but there are some things she cannot do herself. The crew removed blackberries growing in from the neighbor's yard, trimmed a hedge and many bushes, power washed two patios, cleaned flower beds and more. She was clearly tickled to have young people in her home. She opened about her life experiences and came away inspired to restart the writing of her memoirs.

8. Wanda is an 88-year-old widow who has lived in her NE Bellevue house 41 years. She maintains a lovely small garden but needs help with more difficult tasks. The crew cleaned flower beds, trimmed bushes & trees, uncovered stepping stones and cleaned & stained a small wooden bridge over a pond.

9. Paula and Robert are in their 70's and live in Lake Hills. Both are dealing with health issues, including recent surgery for Robert. The crew trimmed the bushes and trees in the yard, as well as spread 20+ bags of bark in the flower beds. Both expressed their delight in the crew and appreciation for doing the work they cannot.

10. Carolyn is a widow in her 70's and lives in Lake Hills. She suffered a stroke six years ago, so cannot care for her yard herself. The crew trimmed and mowed the front & back yards. The back yard had many blackberries and overgrown bushes, all of which were cut way back. Carolyn was so happy to have her roses stand out instead of the tall grass and weeds.

11. Teri and Hal are in their mid-80's and live in Lake Hills. Both suffer from Alzheimer's, so their daughter lives with them as caregiver. The crew weeded the front flower beds and spread 8 yards of donated bark mulch. This was work the family simply could not do, and they were so happy to have it done for them.

12. Bill lives in south Bellevue with three generations in the house. He has diabetes and is bound to a wheelchair with his foot in a boot. The crew trimmed the bushes and trees in the entire yard, mowed the lawn, cleaned the roof & gutters and cut back a large laurel hedge. Bill was on the porch the whole time and enjoyed the conversation, as much as the work.