

Bethlehem Serves 2025
Project Leader Summaries

1. Community Resource Center Thrift Store- Skye Svenningsen

I had the opportunity to work alongside five volunteers at the Community Resource Center. Together we sorted donations, tagged clothing, swept, organized, and dusted. The CRC thrift store plays an important role in supporting our community, as the funds it raises go directly toward outreach programs, including providing shelter and support for women and children leaving situations of domestic violence. It was a meaningful day of service and teamwork that will help make a real difference in the lives of those in need

2. Chiming For Seniors - Mona Goetsch

Thirteen congregational members of various ages entertained senior citizens at the Westmont Assisted Living Facility and Belmont Village Senior Living Center. They sang old time favorites accompanying themselves with hand chimes. The power of music united all in song as many seniors joined in with their voices.

3. Beach Clean-up - Beth Nelson

The fabulous beach clean up team of 12 collected 27 pounds of trash at Moonlight Beach and playground. I was approached several times by people thanking us for cleaning up the beach. It was a great opportunity to talk up BLC. We may even get a new visitor or two to BLC. The most unusual item collected was a Mario Cart toy. We had an avid trash collector pick up a swimmer's goggles and towel... which were happily reunited to their rightful owner. Trash highlights, or lowlights..given it was trash are attached. The data changes each year (covid was heavy on masks and styrofoam). It's kind of like a mini archeological dig leaving us clues about the beach goers. This year's group liked foil confetti, protein bars and lost a lot of hair ties. Many thanks to you and Jana for pulling everyone together. I love this event and what it says about BLC.

4. Car Wash - Pastor Sam/ Olsons

We had a great crew of 12 people and we washed 12 cars raising over \$400 that will be donated to Global Refuge a.k.a. Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services.

5. Laundry Bundles - Rose Moldenhauer

Our group of 8 people assembled laundry bundles for women at One Safe Place. This is a place for women and children from domestic violence homes. We made 83 bundles of laundry detergents and cleaning supplies.

6, *Plants for the Neighbors- Rose Gregory*

I led the “Flowers for Neighbors” event with the help of 7 volunteers. We were gifting 9 different species (with a total of 20 individual plants) to members of the community. I began our time together by explaining these plants’ important ecological roles and some general care instructions for them. Then I had each volunteer come and select a species that they wanted to learn about. This volunteer was then responsible for writing a personalized note to our neighbors expressing our hope they would accept our gift—and nurture it! I had prepared separate materials for each species explaining its own specific requirements (soil type, light, and water). It was wonderful to see the creativity that flowed through the volunteers as they wrote caring messages to the recipients along with beautiful illustrations. The volunteers used colored pencils to draw bees, butterflies, sunshine, clear skies, birds, and, of course, flowers! This was the lion’s share of the work of our event. At 10:30am, in the words of our youngest volunteer Bradley (age 10), we were ready to go “share the gift of kindness”. We walked to a nearby neighborhood where we met many grateful neighbors who were surprised to receive these gifts for no other reason than “because”. Bradley perfected his speech as the next hour wore on, explaining to those who opened their doors that we are their neighbors gifting native wildflowers, for their enjoyment and the pollinators’! It was delightful to see the goodness in these people as they received the generosity of Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Our work brought about many smiles this past Sunday, both of our neighbors and us volunteers!

7. *CRC Food Pantry - Steve Goetsch*

Bethlehem Lutheran Church began our “Community Serves” day back on August 22, 2010. Every year since the first service day, we have had projects with the Community Resource Center, headquartered in Encinitas.

This year I lead a group of five people. Our target was the Food and Nutrition Center located at 650 Second Street in Encinitas. We did a “deep cleaning” of the pantry shelves and interior for about two hours. We used cleaning products purchased with funds from the Thrivent Action Teams. Leah from the CRC staff was our contact. We noted that the shelves were less crowded than in previous years. Leah informed us that the demand for food by their clients has increased substantially in recent months.

8. *Hygiene Kits - Julie Derouin*

This year I was privileged to head up the Hygiene Kits project, to provide personal essentials to our homeless communities. We were able to assemble 200 kits, and each included such items as comb, toothbrush, razor, soap, shampoo and conditioner, toothpaste, shaving cream, body lotion, lip balm, Qtips, deodorant, and sunscreen. These kits were delivered to the Interfaith Community Services Center in Escondido, and were greatly appreciated. I was joined by 5 1/2 partners, including Kelly (and Cleo) Humphrey, Sue Kristiansen, Beverly Laning, Phil Mattson, and Gail Winterborn. Items were purchased through “Bags in Bulk” for \$629.16, \$250 of which was graciously provided by Thrivent. The remainder of items were purchased from Amazon for a total

of \$535.05, for a grand total of \$1164.20, which comes out to about \$5.82 per kit. Thank you for this opportunity to give back to those in need. Sincerely, Julie Derouin

9. Ocean Knoll School Garden - Karen Saake

We had a small, 11 people, but mighty team in the garden that accomplished an amazing amount of work. We cleared raised garden beds, raked back mulch, laid and repaired irrigation lines, planted, and spread mulch. With the Thrivent card we purchased rakes, irrigation supplies, seedlings, and seeds.

Thank you so much!

10. School Bags - Jana Hegg

Bethlehem Serves Day was a wonderful success as the School Bags group came together to assemble 170 backpacks full of school supplies to be sent to Lutheran World Relief, along with 60 backpacks for students in our own community. Around 16 adults helped with this project, and we partnered with St. Andrew's across the street to collect donations—gathering more supplies than ever before. We are deeply grateful to everyone who donated and participated in this effort, and we are excited to place these school supplies into the hands of children both locally and around the world. All of the backpacks are now packed up and waiting to be delivered to the in-gathering for Lutheran World Relief in October. If anyone has a truck and might be interested in helping please let us know.

11. First Responder Baskets- Wes and Judi Westlake

Despite the rain, Wes, Judi, Monica, the Hunter family and Jamie helped fill the baskets with goodies. We all signed the Thank You cards that Judi made. The group first went to the fire station on Balour. Madeline and Spero got fire hats and stickers and asked questions about the fire pole. We all drove to the Sheriff's station but they were out on a call which we had anticipated. We then drove to the Lifeguard station at Moonlight beach. We got a tour there and the kids got more stickers. It worked out well as the sheriff showed up there and we were able to give him their basket and the kids got to try on some handcuffs and receive more stickers and checked out his car. All the First Responders expressed their gratitude.

12. Dog/Cat Toys for the San Diego Humane Society - Carolin Meinhardt

This project was an additional project created to provide extra service time as other on-campus groups finished their assigned tasks. However, it also became a welcome project for prospective new members who arrived at church for the 9 a.m. service. We were able to welcome 5 visitors with this project so we started immediately after our service. A total of 9 people participated in this project (5 visitors and 4 members, which included Molly & Rene since the Prayer Shawl ministry group was so small.)

We created 103 toys for dogs & cats - 79 dogs toys and 24 cat toys. The dog toys were made out of socks with either a water bottle or tennis ball inserted into a long sock and tied at each end. The cat toys were made by putting a hole into a wine cork then inserting then glueing raffia & ribbon into a wine cork. These toys were delivered to the Oceanside San Diego Humane Society and were accepted with gratitude. There are actually two sites in Oceanside - one for dogs and another for cats and small animals.

13. Food for Bethlehem Serves - Cynthia Heigold

We served lunch to 116 volunteers. The beef and chicken were catered from Nopalito Restaurant. I made the rice and beans which reduced the cost of the meal to \$5.50 per person. Volunteers also brought salads and desserts. Everyone seemed pleased with the meal. Teri Grady and I did the morning prep, and we had others join in to help serve.