

Local companies take time to help community

BY BETH EDWARDS

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It was a roan-soaked day at the Foothills United Way Day of Caring on Aug. 15. Despite the rain, volunteers turned out in record numbers, donating more than 3,700 hours, or approximately \$73,000 worth of work, to local non-profits and other organizations.

Approximately 940 volunteers from local businesses participated, including many from Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp., Covidien, IBM, Level 3 Communications and Lockheed Martin. Together, the volunteers completed 87 projects, which benefitted 47 local organizations in Boulder and Broomfield counties.

This year's projects included rebuilding an outdoor mounting area at the Colorado Therapeutic Riding Center, packing and delivering food items to clients at both the Boulder and Longmont Meals on Wheels projects, painting the gymnasium at the YMCA of Boulder Valley, sorting and organizing food donations at Sister Carmen Community Center in Lafayette, and salvaging and recycling old water valves at Midway Park in Broomfield.

One of the project volunteers was Dennis Hughes with IBM who worked at YWCA of Boulder to rebuild its playground.

"We worked on an outdoor beautification project," Hughes said. "We dug up flower beds and moved a half ton of rock around the bed once it was replanted. We



COURTESY FOOTHILLS UNITED WAY

Mike Noesen, left, of Guaranty Bank, and James Corboy, of KPMG LLP, volunteered at the Boulder Day Nursery during the Foothills United Way Day of Caring on Aug. 15. Approximately 940 volunteers from local businesses participated, and approximately \$73,000 worth of work was accomplished.

were working up a sweat, but everyone stayed energized because of the rain. It could have been 90 degrees in that horrid, hot weather we've had recently."

Hughes manages the Day of Caring volunteers at IBM and chooses the projects will be involved with. Once he receives the project site list from United Way, it's a fast and furious race to bid on projects. The event is such a popular way for businesses to give back to the community,

companies bid quickly on projects they want. Hughes chose 16 projects from the list and had to turn away employees who wanted to volunteer.

Jennifer Meyer had a similar experience at Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. She had to cut off the number of employees who wanted to be involved at 40. This year Ball employees were concentrated at the Colorado Therapeutic Riding Center in Longmont.

"We worked on a variety of projects," Meyer said. "We built picnic tables, raked trails, raked out the hay barn, all in the rain. Everything turned to mud. No one

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was going back to work that day."

Kelly Rucker, the vice president of community impact at the Foothills United Way, said this year's volunteer numbers were up by more than 300. Along with IBM's 140 volunteers, Covidien had 175, Level 3 had 170, and Infoprint Solutions and Lockheed Martin both had 50.

"It's funny how competitive they get about what projects they want to work on," Rucker said. "They are sitting at the computers with their finger on the button as soon as online registration opens. This was probably the best year we've ever had in our 15-year history, even with the rain. Their willingness to do anything in that kind of weather was unbelievable."