

Communication Services  
5334 South Prince Street  
Littleton, Colorado 80166-0001  
Phone: 303-795-4630  
Fax: 303-738-7894  
[www.co.arapahoe.co.us](http://www.co.arapahoe.co.us)

**For release: July 1, 2009**

Contact:

**NICHOLE PARMELLY**

Communication Services Specialist

Direct: 720-874-6669

Mobile: 303-710-7893

E-mail: [nparmelly@co.arapahoe.co.us](mailto:nparmelly@co.arapahoe.co.us)

## **Service First in action**

*Arapahoe County and volunteers put service into action to beautify parks, open space*

**Littleton, CO** — It's a long trip all the way from Texas, but that didn't slow down 60 youth from Paulann Church in San Angelo, TX, and Southlink Church in Centennial, CO, as they put their Service First philosophy into action and donated their time and energy to help beautify some of Arapahoe County's parks and open space.

"The impact volunteers have on our community is enormous," said Arapahoe County Commissioner Jim Dyer. "The extra hands from this project alone allowed the County to tackle a project that has been on our to do list for more than a year."

Volunteers spent Wednesday picking up trash, re-staining a boardwalk, mulching around trees, and removing noxious weeds from the County's Cherry Creek Valley Ecological Park and Community Park in Centennial.

Historically, Paulann Church conducts a youth mission in Mexico, and due to circumstances was unable to repeat the trip this year. As an alternative, the pastors brainstormed a way to create a project that would bring youth from both churches together.

"The heartbeat of our church is to be a blessing to our community," said Jason Lohse, Associate Pastor of Southlink Church. "We share values [with our local government] and we are working together to see our community become a better place."

The work not only saved the County thousands of dollars in maintenance costs but also will impact the natural habitat of the Eco Park. Dalmatian Toadflax, a state identified noxious weed, has a reputation for forming dense colonies that drive out a diversity of native plants, birds and small mammals. Removing this weed will help restore the habitat to its native condition.

These parks and many others along with areas of open space are made possible by the generous citizens of Arapahoe County through the voter-approved Arapahoe County Open Space Sales and Use Tax, which is dedicated to preserve open space and natural areas; protect lands that preserve water quality in rivers, lake and streams; provide, maintain and improve neighborhood parks, open space, sports fields, picnic facilities and multi-use trails; protect wildlife habitat and corridors; preserve agriculture and ranchlands; and enhance and maintain designated heritage areas.

To learn more about the Arapahoe County Open Space program, visit [www.co.arapahoe.co.us](http://www.co.arapahoe.co.us) or call 720-874-6500. To volunteer to make our community a better place, call Val Purser at 303-738-7938.

\* \* \*

To download photos click on the link: <ftp://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Pub/CM/Photos/VolunteerProject/>

Open Space Volunteer Event: 60 youth put their Service First philosophy into action and donated their time and energy to help beautify some of Arapahoe County's parks and open space.

OpenSpaceVolunteersatWork: Volunteers help beautify Arapahoe County Community Park, an older park Centennial, bringing it up to neighboring standards.