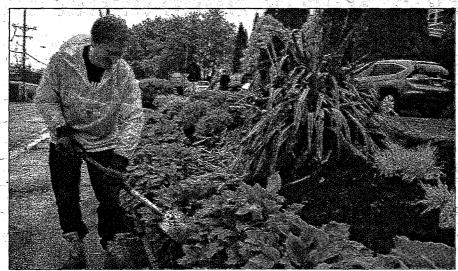
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Volunteers reach out to the community



Mike Orazzi | Staff

General Electric's John Pollman cleans up the grounds at the New England Carousel Museum on Riverside Avenue in Bristol as part of the United Way Day of Caring Friday morning.

By STEVE COLLINS

Way's Day of

Caring. To offer United Way's a helping Day of Caring hand

hard-pressed many locations.

At the New England Carousel Museum, 30 BRISTOL - Friday's General Electric workrain didn't dampen the ers from Plainville spirits of hundreds of worked side-by-side with volunteers who fanned a group of high school out across the communi- students to spruce up the ty as part of the United Riverside Avenue destina-

tion's outside appearance.

Despite the sometimes heavy rain, "it was like

nonprofits, the vol- an ant farm out there" unteers painted walls, with people scurrying shoveled mulch, swept in every direction, said floors, dunked plastic toys Louise DeMars, the direcinto buckets of bleach tor of the museum. "You and much much more at can't beat that kind of See LIKE, Page 3

Like an ant farm, volunteers scurried in every direction

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dedication," she said.

Mike Seabrook, a systems engineer at GE's Plainville branch, said he shoveled a lot of mulch with his colleagues, allow who "were here to do work" as they many years.

"It's like having an Army. I want all of these people to move in and stay with us," DeMars said.

At the homeless shelter on Upson Street, students from both and a couple more from Plainville hallways and more.

the community that does so much for us," said Bristol Central High School junior Athena Giannopoulis while standing on DePaul Society's shelter.

Giannopoulis said she didn't mind missing school to help out. "AP exams are over. My work is well." done," she said.

Nahndi Ali, a Bristol Eastern of the city's public high schools High School junior, said it was "pretty nice" to get out of class

High School were busy painting and chip in with the communitywide effort. Ali said she'd painted "It's so nice to give back to a radiator and a hallway at the

"We've all been painting," said William Young, a United Way representative at the shelter. He have for the Day of Caring for a ladder inside the St. Vincent said plans to work on the outside of the building were shelved because of the rain, which happened at several other spots as

> But the work went on anyway. "We are incredibly lucky to have so many dedicated volunteers who were willing to brave the rainy conditions today to help out our community," said Donna Osuch, president of the United Way of West Central Connecticut.

> Day of Caring began in 1992 as a way to help employees of local corporations interact with human service agencies and has grown since then.

"The nonprofit organizations that benefit from the work of these volunteers often do not have the resources themselves to complete these projects and they rely on this event each year to get this work done," she said.

DeMars said small organizations such as the carousel museum don't have the money or staff to do so much work themselves.

She said that the timing is impeccable to get things cleaned up to "kick start" the summer season when more visitors show up at the museum's doors.

At the Imagine Nation, 26 Cigna employees and a handful of students were busy cleaning up all sorts of things.

Jena Doolittle spread thousands of tiny plastic toys out to dry after bleach.

"I am disinfecting all the toys," she said. "I don't think I'll get the smell of bleach out of my hands ing out," she said. for a while."

Three Plainville students sophomore Ally Bernier and freshmen Luc St. Pierre and Erin Kordik - swept up dust and tiny rocks around a first floor exhibit motto. neary.

"I like helping out," Kordik said. "Everyone's doing their fair

Tessica Abate, a social worker for the Plainville school who advises the town's chapter of the United Way's youth board.

Doolittle said the Cigna workers, whose company has moved out of Bristol, still come to the washing them in a bucket full of event because they live in town and love the chance to chip in and get together.

"You feel good that you're help-

Osuch said the many volunteers each year, many of whom return annually, "exemplify the true spirit of what it means" to follow the charity's "Live United"

Steve Collins can be reached at (860) 584-0501, ext. 7254, or at share. It's pretty impressive," said scollins@bristolpress.com.



Brothers Matt and Shawn Fonseca work on the grounds at the Bristol ARC on Lake Avenue during of the United Way Day of Caring Friday morning in Bristol.