

The Daily Item

SERVING THE NORTH SHORE SINCE 1877

itemfive.com

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2024



ITEM PHOTO | SPENSER HASAK

Adriana Rosales picks dried hyssop as she works with other volunteers during Bridgewell's Celebration of Community Day at the Newhall Fields Community Farm in Peabody on Tuesday.

Bridgewell volunteer day is growing

October 1, 2024 by [Adam Levine](#)

PEABODY — Bridgewell, a Peabody-based social and human services agency, launched its month-long series of activities with a Celebration of Community Service Project at Newhall Fields Community Farm on Tuesday.

This is the fourth year Bridgewell and Newhall have partnered for the service project, Bridgewell President & Chief Executive Officer Chris Tuttle said. Many other human service organizations in the community joined Bridgewell for the day, and nearly 70 people showed up to volunteer.

“This truly is my favorite day of the year, where we just get to be together, hang out, really kind of work up a sweat,” Tuttle said.

“I don’t get out with the individuals and get out in the service as much as I want to,” he said. “Any opportunity I have to be part of the Bridgewell individuals, working with them, getting to know them better, reconnecting with them. Today, by far, is the favorite day for me.”

He said this month-long project began as just a day of service approximately five years ago as a way for Bridgewell to give back to Essex and Middlesex county.

“It really is about giving back,” Tuttle said. “It’s a reminder that we’re part of a much larger community.”

The month of service is important for both the staff and individuals Tuttle works with at Bridgewell, he said.

“It’s a relaxing atmosphere. It’s where everyone just can kind of put their guard down, pitch in, talk, connect, bond,” Tuttle said.



ITEM PHOTO | SPENSER HASAK

The dogwood tree planting crew returns from the far side of Newhall Fields Community Farm.

Bridgewell Chief Development Officer Erik Langhoff said the day is about collaboration across the various programs Bridgewell offers.

“It’s not often that we have such a mix of our different programs represented. And for me, that’s really special,” he said.

“We’re trying to do this every day, to give the individuals we serve opportunities to interact with the community,” Langhoff said.

Newhall Fields Community Farm Director Jeanette McGinn said the volunteers divided into seven teams to do a variety of projects in the herb garden hoop house, working with lavender, and in the herb garden.

“This partnership with Bridgewell means a lot to us because it builds awareness for both our organizations that are meeting a need in the community,” McGinn said. “It’s so therapeutic to be out in nature, to have your hands in the soil, to be working with plants.”

She said her favorite part about the annual service project is just introducing new people to the farm and showing them everything it has to offer.

“We’re here and trying to grow as much food as possible in a healthy way that’s good for the planet and good for people,” McGinn said.

State Rep. Thomas Walsh said he wore a suit and tie last year, but came prepared with jeans and working boots to volunteer this year.

“The programs that are run through Newhall Fields are incredibly helpful to the city of Peabody,” Walsh said. “It’s just a fun day of people giving back.”

Greg Stefano, owner of Stefano’s Landscaping, arrived at the farm to volunteer for the day and shovel gravel with his workers.

Stefano said Bridgewell has been a client for years and it is important to support their efforts in the community.

“We love supporting Bridgewell... supporting all their efforts they put into the community,” Stefano said.