

# Community builds playground for shelter



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The Arrowhead United Way Young Leadership Council revamped the Salvation Army Hospitality House Emergency Family Shelter playground for their Martin Luther King Jr. Day project. Pictured from left are YLC members **Monique Rodriguez**, San Bernardino Police Sergeant **Brian Tully** and **Karla Morales**.

## By Naima Ford

The Martin Luther King Jr. holiday was an opportunity for some to relax on their day off. For others it was an opportunity to serve their community in the spirit of King's legacy.

The Arrowhead United Way's Youth Leadership council (YLC) led the effort to create a playground at the Salvation Army Hospitality House Emergency Family Shelter. The Salvation Army moved into the location about eight months ago but there was no place for the many children that

pass through there to play. The facility has 80 beds and welcomes families who are homeless in need of a place to stay. At its capacity last month 32 adults and 44 children were staying in the shelter.

The only space was a piece of pavement.

When the YLC was looking for a community project to celebrate the holiday with they approached Captain Stephen Ball, commander of the Salvation Army, and asked if the playground would be a good idea.

"He was thrilled with the idea," said Knea Hawley, vice president of Resource Development, Arrow-

head United Way.

According to Ball, when the organization planned to move the shelter there they had to do extensive renovations.

"We just barely had enough money to renovate," said Ball.

Over 150 volunteers donated their day to making what looked more like a parking lot into a fun place for children to play.

"It was amazing to see that many people come together," said Hawley.

There were members of the YLC as well as volunteers from many other organizations. They included the employees of Kohl's and Target Distribution Centers, the San Bernardino City and Rialto Fire departments and students from Rialto High School.

"They came from every aspect of the community," she said.

The day began with an inspiring word from San Bernardino City Councilmember Virginia Vasquez about the work of King. Then volunteers got to work.

They painted a four-square court and a basketball court and installed basketball hoops.

They also created a play area for toddlers by constructing a playhouse and installing small slides. There are also new tether ball courts.

To brighten up the area, children friendly pictures were painted on the ground, flowers were planted and umbrellas were installed at the tables. Six new benches were also built to give people a place to sit outdoors.

"It was a great day," said Ball.

Initially the group only had \$50 for the project, but looked to other resources and received thousands in donations from Home Depot and Kohl's.



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Students from Rialto High were one of the many to help install basketball courts, build benches and plant flowers for the new playground.