

# All work and some play...

## Dozens of LVC students give back to community through volunteer day at Coleman park.

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Elliott Granito, background, an LVC freshman and Mechanicsburg native, and Mike Lebo, a sophomore and Sinking Spring native, stack bricks from the ruins of a cooling pit at the old iron furnace at Coleman Memorial Park on Saturday. (LEBANON DAILY NEWS JEREMY LONG )

Deep in the woods at Coleman Memorial Park, what is normally a peaceful place on a warm, sunny day was filled with the sounds of construction Saturday.

A crew of a half-dozen Lebanon Valley College students led by Jim Polczynski, vice president of the Friends of Coleman Memorial Park, thrust shovels into the earth and threw bricks into piles to clean up the remains of the former iron furnaces that graced the land in the 1840s.

"I like this place," Elliott Granito, a freshman at LVC and a Mechanicsburg native, said as he tossed a brick onto the pile. "I like being able to come out and do something good for the community."

Polczynski intends to clean the ruins up along the hiking trail and place a sign that describes the history of the place at the northern end of Lebanon.

"This is a huge help to us," he said of the students, who spent six hours Saturday working at the park. "It's heavy work. It needs a large group of people. You can get a lot of work done in a few hours."

Cleaning up the ruins was just one project for the three dozen or so college students, now in their second year volunteering at the park and their fifth volunteering overall. Other projects included maintenance on the hiking trails, gardening, painting, building bat houses and picking up litter along the park's perimeter.

"It's a big help," said Craig Henninger, park manager. "We get a lot of work done that needs to be done but isn't a top priority."

"This promotes the college's mission of preparing students for a life of service to others," said the Rev. Paul Fullmer, college chaplain and director of community service.

Along the perimeter of the park, three LVC students headed by Karl Wolf, a member of the park board of directors, donned fluorescent safety vests as they looked for litter along the roadways.

"It's different," said Colt Zarilla, a junior at LVC from Dover, York County. "You see how trash really impacts the environment."

In the middle of the park, where the old, redbrick stable stands, the sound of power tools poured from the open doors. Inside, students built bat houses with a little help from a friend.

Joshua Tice of Lebanon gave Matt Kisiday, an LVC junior from Wellesley, Mass., a hand with a bat house.

"I'm having fun helping with the bat houses," Tice said with a big smile.

Kisiday agreed.

"It's a lot of fun helping them out and being able to bond with the athletes," he said.

Tice and a few other Special Olympics athletes joined the LVC students and helped with the projects in honor of Eunice Kennedy Shriver Day, named in honor for the Special Olympics founder. During their lunch break, the students and athletes put down their shovels and picked up bats for a rousing game of Wiffle Ball before heading back to work.

"It's important for the athletes to interact with the students and the students to interact with the athletes," said Debbie Tice, fundraiser coordinator for Special Olympics of Lebanon County.

It wasn't all fun and games. Chase Ferrario and Caleb Brown worked their hands to the bone constructing a butterfly garden in the park.

"I'm starting to get blisters," Brown, a senior and Ephrata native, said as he swung an ax. "It's good work. I like landscaping and helping the community out."

"It's a lot of fun, and I like working outside," said Ferrario, a junior from Halifax, Dauphin County.

Saturday was not just a day for students to put in a few hours of community service, but a day to give back to the community and help preserve the 96-acre county treasure.

"This is a Lebanon County park," said Fred Yeagley, a member of the park's board of trustees. "The entire county uses this. It's a huge asset."