

The City of San Ramon has initiated the Parks Make Life Better Clean Up Days [PMLB] which is a collaborative effort between two City Departments – Parks and Community Services and Public Services. This unique program brings together the strengths, talents and interests of two Departments and the events would not be possible without the contributions of both Departments. The program started in the Fall of 2011 and to date, there have been 22 event dates, at 13 locations, with 580 volunteers providing 1695 hours of service.

The City is home to 54 parks that residents are proud of, and that thousands of people use each week. There are between 6-10 park sites selected each fall for the following calendar year. The full year calendar of dates and locations are announced in the fall and early winter. PMLB are open to all ages however those 13 and under are accompanied by an adult. Each clean up event has approximately 35-50 volunteers. Many of the volunteers are middle and high school students who are completing community service hours for their schools. The events are held on a Saturday morning for three hours.

The Public Services staff includes maintenance managers, supervisors and maintenance technicians. These staff identify sites where volunteer assistance in maintaining parks and assisting with repair projects would be beneficial. Some of the tasks for the PMLB are: planting, pruning, spreading mulch, replacing playground surfacing materials, painting fences, sanding and painting picnic tables, general cleanup. Each of the Department Park Maintenance Supervisors is responsible for coordinating one or two days per year. They identify the projects, establish a supply list and ready the site for the clean up day including having the materials and equipment ready. They also work that day providing direction and coordination. The Department has also created an equipment trailer with all of the necessary rakes, shovels, and other tools that the participants need. This trailer moves from site to site throughout the year as needed.

The Parks and Community Services staff include recreation coordinators and marketing staff. These staff promote and advertise the PMLB in the Recreation Guide, send out press releases, promote the events on the city website and through social media, register the volunteers and work at the event checking in volunteers, and bringing water and snacks for the participants. The Department uses an online volunteer registration and event signup software for ease of use by the participants.

These events achieve the following goals:

1. Offer volunteer opportunities for residents to make a difference in their local park;
2. Create a program that requires the expertise and support from two departments with unique strengths and talents;
3. Exposes the volunteers to new parks that they might not otherwise visit;
4. Provides an active volunteer opportunity that is good exercise and promotes activity;
5. Helps residents learn some new maintenance techniques that may be useful at their home;
6. Saves the City money in terms of the volunteer labor that is contributed.

Input via a survey from the volunteers who have participated included:

- The projects were meaningful and interesting to me (80% yes)
- Volunteering for a PMLB event increases pride in the community (70% very much so)
- Volunteering for a PMLB event increased awareness of neighborhood parks (70% very much)
- *I liked the cooperation; meeting other like-minded residents; working to help my community; staff was very inviting; monotonous work is really relaxing; makes me feel proud of our city; event means progress towards a hardworking future; gave me a safe, close to home, meaningful outlet for my desire to volunteer and help; I get a feeling of pride, that I made a difference*



City of San Ramon
 Parks Make Life Better Clean Up Days

Sponsored by San Ramon
 Parks and Community
 Services and San Ramon
 Public Services Departments

[City Lights Volunteer Program](http://citylights.volunteerhub.com)