



Albany, Mo.

## **HELPING HANDS**

Albany's first "Helping Hands" grew out of the Visionary Partnership for a Rural Community because the members realized older citizens in the community needed assistance with yard work, cleaning gutters, trimming bushes, washing windows and other yard work. The project's goal was to utilize the community's resource of volunteers to create a unified volunteer service for the future. This partnership consists of representatives from the Albany Community Betterment Organization, City of Albany, Northwest Medical Center, N. W. Area Agency on Aging, Ministerial Alliance, Chamber of Commerce, Midland Empire Resources for Independent Living, Department of Mental Health, Golden Living Center and the University of Missouri Extension.

Information about this project appeared in the Albany Ledger and the Community Shopper listing the telephone number for citizens to call if they needed assistance. Members also spread word about the project throughout town. As a result, 25 individuals signed up for the assistance and teams were created by the member agencies. The call-in list was coordinated by Rebecca Flaherty of the N. W. Agency on Aging and Kathy Morgan of the City of Albany. The size of the response was considered a good sign of community need and community willingness to help.

On May 1st, a week before the City of Albany's Clean-up Day, 40 women, men and young people met at 9 o'clock and divided into teams to go to one of the 25 assigned homes on the call-in work list. A few teams worked at more than one home. The volunteers brought needed cleaning supplies, ladders, chain saws, rakes, shovels, clippers and spades and any other items that might be needed. The groups worked for 4 hours after which they met for lunch provided by the Albany Baptist Church Ladies. If a job was not completed by lunch time, a team returned to the home and finished the work.

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At the end of the day, the volunteers were tired but gratified by the work they had done and the home owners saw much needed improvement to their residence. It was amazing how improved the properties looked after the clean-up day was completed. Some of those needing assistance do not like to take charity but they saw that this outpouring of help was just one neighbor helping another. And that was a good feeling for all involved.

Inquiries are already being made about another "Helping Hands Day" this fall. Because of the success of this project, another "Helping Hands" event will again be held in conjunction with the City's Fall Clean-up Day.

The only cost for this event was for advertising in our local papers, the Albany Ledger and the Shopper and this cost was underwritten by Visionary Partnership for a Rural Community.

Albany Community Betterment works with all other organizations in creating a physically and spiritually healthy environment for our community which includes improving the eye appeal of our community to our citizens and future citizens. This project shows civic pride and fits with the goals of Albany Community Betterment Association. We are improving our community in order for it to meet its basic needs and enhance the quality of life for all of our citizens - thus making it a great place to live, work, and play.

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