

## CARP Bay Area volunteers' Oakland, CA off-ramp garden beautification project

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*CARP Bay Area members of the Chabot College and UC Berkeley chapters*

On February 26th, 2022, CARP Bay Area, in collaboration with [Service for Peace](#) and [High Street Coalition](#), carved out time on their Saturday morning to volunteer for a off-ramp garden beautification project in Oakland, California.

The project was split into two parts, neighborhood trash cleanup and garden beautification, both of which CARP members from Chabot College and University of California (UC), Berkeley participated in.

From the get-go, the excitement to "get things done" was palpable, and as the pile of collected trash grew, so did the energy and joy of volunteers increase as they felt the satisfaction of witnessing the direct result of their efforts: a cleaner, more beautiful neighborhood.

M. Rodas, second year UC Berkeley student shared, "I had a lot of fun, doing something outside my usual routine, as a Cal student," and that it helped her to, "realize that I have to prioritize what matters to me and make time for it: helping others, helping out, and making a change starts with small projects such as this one."

Not only did this project strengthen the desire to serve amongst the volunteers, but the bright yellow volunteer vests and tell-tale trash pickers, prompted many honks and waves from inspired and grateful passersby. Some even joined in on the project!

E. Guerra, second year Chabot College student expressed that "[t]his was a really great experience! [...] it

felt great there [were] a lot of people who were passing by rolled down their windows and said thank you to us or gave a thumbs up[;] that was sweet. [...] The streets and where they planted new flowers near the freeway exit looks a hundred times better!"

S. Yonetani, Chabot College student, shared that, "while we were picking snack wrappers, cigarette butts and cardboard a man drove over to us. He asked why we are doing this and explained he wants to join too! He said he will bring his nephew to pick up trash. Afterwards, we saw the man and his nephew" and they had joined the project!

From college professors and students to software engineers to public school teachers, this service project attracted all kinds of people for the purpose of contributing to a more beautiful neighborhood. As S. Yonetani shared, "When we have a heart of serving, in return we feel joy by making others feel happy and clean."

