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Hundreds of daffodil bulbs planted in the midst of COVID

By Vera Kochan



Signs of spring as daffodils bloom along Moraga Way in Moraga Photo Vera Kochan The Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley was determined to honor its annual tradition of planting daffodil bulbs in winter, even in the middle of COVID mandates. However, the project is usually done with a large group of volunteers. This was where human ingenuity stepped in

This year's tribute to spring can now be seen at the intersection of Moraga Way/Moraga Valley Lane on the Moraga Country Club side of the road. Kiwanis Secretary Sam Sperry was tasked with creating a safe and socially distant environment for the team of helpers. Unfortunately, invitations to participate had to be withdrawn for the Moraga Garden Club and Boy Scout Troop 212 in order to limit the planters to family groups.

Sperry marked off three planting areas with stakes and yellow tape making sure they were no closer than six feet apart. Each planting station had separate bottled

water for each participant along with hand sanitizer and paper towels. Additionally, he used a temporal thermometer to take each volunteer's temperature upon arrival and just prior to planting. "I also asked each participant to confirm upon arrival that he/she was not experiencing any symptoms of illness and had not been advised of having been around anyone who tested positive for COVID," he said. "I also had each of them sign a legal instrument I prepared, which I entitled a `Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk', to protect our club and its affiliated foundation from any liability for COVID-related claims stemming from their participation; and of course each participant was required to wear a mask." Sperry himself made certain to keep a minimum of six feet away from the workers while he doled out a steady supply of daffodil bulbs.

"I structured the planting work in two shifts of two hours each," explained Sperry. "One from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., and the other from 1 to 3 p.m., thereby honoring the recommendation that `outdoor gatherings' be limited to two hours. For each shift, I limited participation to no more than three households."

The morning shift included Kiwanis member Karl Davis, his wife and three children, who at the end of two hours had planted an astounding 700 bulbs. The afternoon shift had three Club members and their spouses, John and Darlene Haffner, Steve and Peggy Woehleke, and Leslie Engler with her husband Ethan Bortman. These three teams planted an equally impressive 600 bulbs in two hours.

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<u>back</u>

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