

**A**bout a year and half ago, Chaplain Mathew Holder stood on an empty patch of land talking to the outgoing Garrison Commander discussing the idea of putting a memorial walk on Camp Parks. One can only speculate the nature of the conversation but the end result was that an empty piece of land will be used to build a park to commemorate fallen military service personnel. But, it won't cost the government one cent of labor and materials. Then, get the new Commander Lt. Col. David James had to buy into the plan.

Elsewhere in San Ramon Steve Liao who is part Building Bridges, a civic organization that looks to leverage the enthusiasm of their community and has done small projects to serve the military community was looking for another project. His organization had contacts with big organizations like Home Depot and Scotts Miracle-Gro.

Holder and Liao who often collaborate on civic projects just had the proverbial cosmic connection. The answer was there and all they had to do was bring big Army, big love and big business together.

Little did they know the epic task they were about to take on. Each step required a decision and each decision had a process. What seemed a simple civic project had legal requirements equal to any construction endeavor. It took hundreds of steps just to put a shovel in the ground. But every weekend be it the lone chaplain moving mountains with one wheel barrow to a scout troop earning merit badges the community pulled together.

Liao and Building Bridges mobilized its volunteers and contacted Home Depot, Scotts Miracle-Grow and Delta Blue Grass to provide building materials and

design expertise. Altogether a patchwork of volunteers, businesses, and military civic organizations drove to the singular task of building a park for everyone.

Fast-forward to July 28, 2012 and the culmination of a year's work result in a ribbon cutting ceremony that honor the fallen from all military services.

"I went out and contacted Building Bridges help put this together and they contacted Home Depot who contacted Scotts Miracle-Grow and they contacted Delta Blue Grass they were the one who provide all the materials to build this park here." said Holder, "I want to thank our Navy Seabees here on Parks, and the Boy Scouts that came out"

As part of the ceremony Lt. Col James presented The Army Achievement Medal to Holder and praised him for his dedicated service in completing the park

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project. “Cpt. Holder was the driving force to complete this park” said Lt. Col. James. His efforts with the help of others made this park possible.

Also, James presented letters of appreciation to Laura Arkell of Home Depot, Steve Liao of Building Bridges, Derek Lafontaine Scotts Miracle Grow Company, Dinah Zuckerman of Delta Blue Grass Company, and Ms. Lucie Titus MG William F. Dean Chapter AUSA for providing volunteers, equipment, materials and resources.

Organizations that were also presented letter letters of appreciation were Venture Crew 937, Boy Scout Troop 549, US Army East Bay Recruiting Command, Naval Construction Battalion Det. 18.

Gill Smith, Chris Pahia were separately recognized by James for there countless hours of labor in completing the project.

“ This is a great way of giving thanks and giving back to the community, said James, so for all of you who have contributed to help to build this park I thank you.”

The ceremony concluded with a solemn bag pipe rendition of Amazing Grace by Cpt. Paul Tilton of the United States Army.

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