

Platte County's National Day of Service 2009

by Bonnie Goldberg

John McGurk, Platte County Field Organizer for the Obama campaign asked his old team to get involved in Barack Obama's inauguration activities. Martin Luther King Day was designated a National Day of Service by Congress in 1994. Obama's plan was to make the weekend and MLK Day the first day of a continuing effort to increase volunteer community involvement.

The Presidential Inaugural Committee made it easy when a web site was established. UsaService.org, acts as a clearing house for events in any given area. Synergy Services was the local charity we chose. The first event was Saturday January 19. It involved sorting clothing for the Synergy Thrift Store located at 65th and North Oak. The second event on Monday the 20th was a clean up effort for one of Synergy's properties, the Judge Pratt House, an elegant older home donated by Clay County Judge Pratt. Park Hill South High School Young Democrats club wanted to work at this location on Martin Luther King Day, a day off school for them. The third event was a baby wipes and diaper drive for the Synergy Services women's and children's shelters.



For additional photos, go to: <http://www.facebook.com/n/?inbox/readmessage.php&t=1099804535644>

All three events were listed on the UsaService.org web site. The Inaugural Committee did all the advertising for us by sending out emails and videos to the vast numbers of email addresses the campaign had compiled. Another nice feature of the UseService.org web site is that it also contains links to other charity organizations if you can't find what you want in the main listing.

The Saturday thrift store crew had so much fun that we have already set up a schedule to make it a regular once per month event.

The Monday Pratt house crew worked hard on a day that barely reached to the mid twenties with a chilly wind. This crew also wants to come back and do more, maybe when the weather warms a bit.

But the big surprise was the diaper and baby wipe drive. Items could be picked up or run as a collection drive in neighborhoods or schools. We weren't sure this would work. Then I got an email from a mom that had set up a drive for her neighborhood with her children. I made a flyer for her to distribute to neighbors. One of her neighbors has Diapers.com as a client. Diapers.com donated a pallet of diapers (that's 3,000 diapers) to Synergy Services! With that donation and all the others, Synergy Services has a good supply of diapers! As an added bonus, Diapers.com is willing to donate again. This connection was made because Barack Obama wanted to include community service among his inauguration events and neighbors asked neighbors. This is Erik Murray, the neighbor that asked Diapers.com for the donation, helping to unload the pallet of diapers.

