

Kids treat pet cemetery to a little TLC

Cemeteries

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SCOTTS VALLEY

About 25 members of DeLaveaga Elementary School's student council came together for an unusual community service project Saturday at the pet cemetery on Sims Road.

For four hours they pulled weeds, painted fences and uprighted and washed tombstones so that dearly departed pets could rest more peacefully.

The cemetery, owned by the Santa Cruz Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, houses about 200 pets, said Debbie Pieracci-Fugate, the mother in charge of the field trip. The SPCA buried pets there from 1930 to the late 1980s.

Orchard Supply Hardware and Cabrillo Monuments donated cleaning supplies for the event. The kids ranged in age from 8 to 12 years old.

By 4 p.m., students had cleaned 86 graves in the cemetery's front section, said Pieracci-Fugate.

"We wanted to do a special community service; everybody's done the beach thing and the senior home thing," she said.

The students hoped owners of the deceased pets will see that the community still cares about them.

"These people loved these pets; for some of them their pets were their only friends, and it's nice for people to visit them," said fourth-grader Katy Spevehaug, 10.

Adrea Castiano, a sixth-grader, said the cemetery was so overgrown when they got there that students were stepping on graves without even knowing it.

"It looks really good now. It's a lot better," said Castiano, 12. "It's important to do community service because it's such a gift to the community and it's giving back ... It lets you know that people care for other people and other animals."

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TOP: Conner Fugate scrubs the dirt from a gravesite Saturday at the pet cemetery on Sims Road.

FAR RIGHT: Young volunteers did what they could to beautify Happy's final resting place.

RIGHT: Connie Manach applies a fresh coat of paint to a fence around a plot at the pet cemetery.

Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel photos

