

# Love Chico has long project list

By **LARRY MITCHELL-Staff Writer**

Posted: 08/08/2010 12:06:40 AM PDT

CHICO — It might tire you out to just read the long list of projects Love Chico has planned for this year's event on Sept. 26.

Fortunately, among 3,500 and 4,500 people are expected to turn out to do the work.

Love Chico is a project in which some churches cancel regular worship services on a chosen Sunday. Instead, their members go into the community and do service work.

"It's just amazing how it's grown over the last four years," said Pam Wear, Love Chico volunteer leader.

It started with just one church, Bidwell Presbyterian, which had the idea of sprucing up nearby Citrus School.

Some other pastors got interested in the project, and the second year, four churches took part.

There were 19 churches the third year, and this year, 26 will participate, Wear said.

"I think the pastors believe that serving in the community is a form of worship," she said. In coming weeks, many of them "will preach on serving the community."

Wear said the original thought was just to do work in the schools, but it turned out the churches had more volunteers than the schools had jobs to do. So Love Chico started branching out.

This year, there are six categories of tasks: assisted living; nonprofits; city, park, county; schools; self-designated; and administrative projects.

"Self-designated" allows church members to design their own projects, possibly assisting a neighbor or helping out a friend. "Administrative" refers to work done by the organizers of Love

Chico.

In the "assisted living" category, 20 nursing homes and assisted-living centers have been identified. Love Chico volunteers will go into these facilities and spend time visiting with residents. Wear said these are good jobs for older volunteers who may not want to do vigorous outdoor work.

In the "nonprofits" category, 15 projects have been selected. A few are painting the Torres Community Shelter; painting the interior of the Work Training Center and installing new carpets, as well as building a chicken coop and pen; fixing barbed wire fences and hanging a gate at the Big Chico Creek Ecological Preserve; and planting oak seedlings at Patrick Ranch.

People who volunteer for the 12 projects in the "city, park and county" category will do such things as clean debris and weeds from Annie's Glen, take down rock

dams in Big Chico Creek, remove invasive plants from Bidwell Park, and clean inside the Chico Library.

Twenty-six schools will have work done, also. Projects are such things as building a sandbox, repairing playground equipment, shampooing carpets, painting, weeding, planting, washing windows and building planter boxes for gardens.

A lot of the organizations being helped by Love Chico have no money for materials, like bark and plants, so the volunteers seek donations.

"We end up spending \$30,000 to \$40,000 on resources," Wear said.

Love Chico's one and only fundraiser will be held at 7 p.m. Aug. 29 at Neighborhood Church. It's a performance by the Love Chico Gospel Choir.

"We're hoping to fill the place and have a love offering and see what happens," Wear said.

Love Chico has a website: [www.lovechico.org](http://www.lovechico.org).

"Our dream is everyone will be out there serving all the time," she said. "Not just one Sunday but week after week after week."

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