

COMMUNITY

Project aids Eugene, El Salvador

By Chris Penttila
Emerald Contributor

Volunteers landscaped apartments, cleaned houses and built aerobic steps in the Whiteaker neighborhood Saturday to raise money for El Salvadorans.

More than 100 Eugene-area volunteers raised an estimated \$9,000 in a project aimed at ending poverty and oppression in both El Salvador and Eugene.

"So much money is spent to fund the elite and to distribute money to the top levels of society," said Nick Velluzzi, a University political science major. "This project means helping people."

The fund-raiser was sponsored by CISCAP, the Committee in Solidarity with the Central American People, an organization working to end poverty and political oppression in both the United States and Central America.

The volunteers worked from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday on various community projects, taking monetary pledges from friends for the number of hours worked.

The Work-A-Thon exceeded its goal of \$4,000, much to the excitement of Rob Bolman, an organizer of the project.

"The day was very successful," Bolman said, "and if all pledges are collected, we will have doubled our goal."

The volunteers divided up into groups to work on three local projects. They built a new tee-ball field at the Whiteaker School in West Eugene, cleaned up a housing development and landscaped the grounds of apartments for low- to middle-income singles.

All the money raised in the Work-A-Thon will support much-needed development in El Salvador.

Half of the funds will be given to 13 El Salvadoran women in an effort to involve them in changes affecting their communities.

CISCAP also will send funds to assist labor organizers and to train ex-combatants of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front.

The other half of the money will be used to purchase a truck and supplies for a national caravan that will travel to El Salvador in March 1993.

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—Bob Jones,
Eugene resident

Although the money will be sent to El Salvador, the volunteers said the Work-A-Thon has a positive local impact.

"I like the concept of this Work-A-Thon because good comes not only to the people of El Salvador, but to the local community as well," said Bob Jones, a Eugene resident.

"I live in the Whiteaker neighborhood, and that's what attracted me to the Work-A-Thon," said Susan Johnese, another Eugene resident.

Velluzzi said he believed the project was important because it reflects not only problems in El Salvador, but also problems in the United States that haven't been addressed by recent administrations.

Lisa Petke of CISCAP pointed out that both the Reagan and Bush administrations have significantly slashed social spending and cut taxes on the wealthiest one percent of Americans.

This, Petke said, has worsened living conditions in the United States, creating an economic structure that favors the wealthy and a societal structure that ignores such problems as AIDS, homelessness, unemployment and poverty.

Petke said groups like CISCAP can play a part in reversing this trend.

"Money from groups like CISCAP is necessary to end the struggle in both El Salvador and the United States," Petke said.

"Until the misery suffered by the poor is ended, our struggle does not end," she said.

Those interested in finding out more about CISCAP projects can contact CISCAP staffer Lisa Petke at 485-8633.

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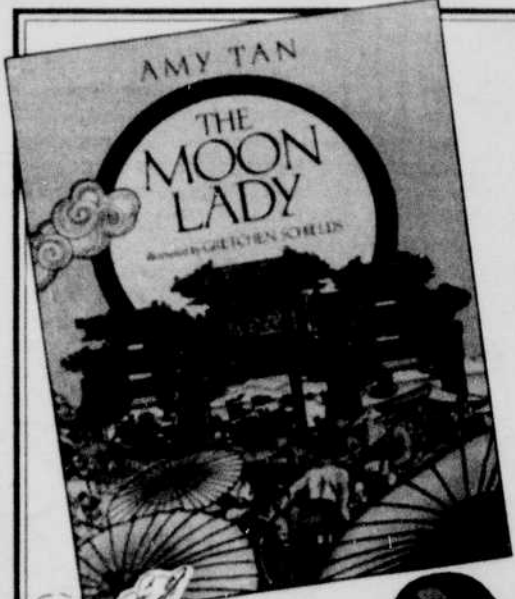
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