

METRO *Life*

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Volunteer Electricians Stand Down To Assist 600 Homeless Vets



Mark McMurtrey, employment specialist with the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program, looks on as IBEW Local 48 electrician Jake Harding installs wiring for Portland Stand Down 1993, an event that provides services for homeless vets.

Electricians from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), Local 48, volunteered their time to install the

wiring for the Third Annual Portland Stand Down, a three-day event for homeless veterans, which took place August 27th through the 29

at West Delta Park, across from the Portland International Raceway in North Portland.

For the third consecutive year,

Local 48 has provided all the labor, supplies, equipment, and work crews for the volunteer project. Friberg Electric Company pro-

vided all project coordination and supervision.

These electrical services included perimeter and inside lighting for the 48 tents, as well as wiring and hook-ups for computers, fax machines, copiers, and modems which were used to help homeless vets access medical and dental care, substance abuse rehabilitation, counseling, legal assistance, and job placement. The project was even equipped with an on-site courtroom and judge.

The event offered support services from many areas including the Employment Division, Veterans Association, Housing & Community Services Department, and Social Security Administration, among others. This year's event assisted approximately 600 people; last year 550 veterans attended.

"We want to contribute our time and efforts to help these veterans who fought for our country, and now don't have a place to sleep or eat," stated Gary Price, third-generation owner of Friberg Electric, and a twice-decorated Vietnam veteran. Price was assisted by Friberg project supervisor Jim Johansen, also a Vietnam Veteran disabled during the war, and the Director of Electrical Operations for the Homeless Veterans Association.

The two men have been coordinating all the electrical work for the event since its inception three years ago. Gary Price also served on the originating committee with veterans who began this program.

"We usually need about 250 manhours to install the wiring that provides all the power to the tent city," said Steve Johnston, on-site project manager for Friberg Electric, who has contributed many hours of his personal time over the past three years. He and his crew

worked four days installing wiring on electrical poles donated and planted by Portland General Electric. "Our volunteer crew hooked up all the services, ran the wiring to the poles, and built the service loads that distributed power to the different tents."

"Many of the vets lacked the proper identification to apply for jobs, or needed legal assistance to clear up certain matters before they could assimilate back into society," said Mark McMurtrey, Stand Down coordinator and employment specialist with the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program, part of the Oregon Employment Department. "Stand Down offered all these support services, as well as a barber shop, clothing center, and food and shelter for the weekend."

IBEW Local 48 provided this volunteer labor in cooperation with the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) and the Metro Electrical Training Trust. Stated Jerry Bruce, dispatcher for Local 48, "We feel very good about helping coordinate preparations for this worthwhile event. Many of our electricians are veterans, and they want to do something to help other veterans."

Added McMurtrey, "These volunteers recognize the plight of homeless people who served their country and now need our help to improve themselves. Stand Down brings in necessary resources that these vets may otherwise be unable to access. The event itself is dependent upon our ability to access electronic records and information for these vets, and to provide them with a safe and secure environment for a few days. We couldn't accomplish any of this without the help of these volunteer electricians and the associations that support them."



Teenaged Student Spends Summer Organizing Back To School Play Day



Today's youth are often criticized for being selfish and uncaring. However, this is certainly not the case with Brent Lawrence, a sophomore at Parkrose High School, who is also enrolled in The Private Industry Council's Summer Training and Education Program (STEP).

In a unique partnership between the East Portland District Coalition of Neighborhoods and The Private Industry Council's STEP Program, Lawrence, age 16, has spent his summer organizing a Back to School Play Day for elementary school children at Mill Park Elementary School. The event is taking place on Saturday, Sept. 11, 1993, from 10am to 1pm.

"When The Private Industry Council originally approached us with the possibility of developing a work experience site for a youth this summer, we felt this would be an excellent opportunity to devote some resources to giving children a fun and uplifting activity to look forward on their return to school, and Brent has proven to be an invaluable asset to the project," said Shelley Wade, Office Manager for the East Portland District Coalition of Neighborhoods.

Meg Kilmer, Lawrence's Youth Advocate at The Private Industry Council, added: "We developed this site so Brent would have an opportunity to try something different than clerical-type work. In putting together Back To School Play Day, Brent has had to utilize organizational skills, and the project has called on his ability to show leadership among his peers. One of his challenges Brent

Lawrence was finding other teens and adults who would be willing to volunteer time supervising activities for children. By taking on the role of a leader among his peers, Brent has been able to recruit a number of other teens as volunteers for this project. In addition, he has worked with Shelley Wade at the East Portland District Coalition of Neighborhoods to organize a number of donations in food and prizes for the event."

Lawrence himself is very excited about Back to School Play Day. "I will be a great time for kids. There'll be kick ball, tug-o-war, jump rope, obstacle courses, carnival games, a bean bag toss, races, a free throw contest and drawings. I'm hoping Play Day provides a safe and fun way for kids to spend a day," said Lawrence.

Children who are enrolled in Mill Park Elementary School and interested in participating in Back to School Play Day must contact Mill Park Elementary School or the East Portland District Coalition of Neighborhoods at 1917 S.E. 122nd, Portland, OR 97233 and return a participation waiver by September 9th. Adults and teens interested in volunteering to supervise activities may also contact the East Portland District Coalition of Neighborhoods at 256-0014 for more information.

The Private Industry Council is a private, non-profit organization whose mission is to promote individual self-sufficiency and a skilled workforce by eliminating barriers to

productive employment.

The East Portland District Coalition is a non-profit coalition of neighborhood associations and community groups east of I-205 and within the Portland City limits. It assists organizations and individuals with citizen participation and community crime prevention efforts.

Low - Cost Tax School Offered

Jackson Hewitt Tax Service will offer its basic tax course beginning in September. Offered as a low-cost alternative to high-priced schools, tuition and supplies for the class will be 159.00.

April Gutierrez, General Manager Jackson Hewitt Tax Service said "Our primary goal is to offer a low-cost school to the public which will enable people to learn the necessary requirements to be eligible to become a licensed tax preparer under Oregon law. High tuition costs in Oregon have made other tax schools prohibitively expensive to many people."

Jackson Hewitt Tax Service is the nation's second largest income tax preparation company with over 700 offices coast-to-coast. In addition to the low-cost tax school, the company also offers free tax return checking and audit assistance. These services are available to everyone even if Jackson Hewitt did not prepare their tax return.

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Artquake 1993



Beautiful sunny weather brought thousands of people to downtown Portland for the largest Urban Arts Festival of the year, Artquake 1993. Leticia Maldonado and her daughter Una Merced, Tony Stringer and his nephew Bobby Jones work on an art project.

photo by Veronica Green

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