



PULLING HIS WHEELCHAIR up to an elevated planting table, an elderly gentleman runs his hand through the cool, moist dirt. As he enjoys the feel of the soil between his fingers, he may be thinking of the garden he once had when raising his family. This opportunity to dig in the dirt and once again plant a vegetable garden was made possible by a JOIN HANDS DAY project that took place on May 1, 2004.

Green Bay Branch Completes Two-Year Project

Phase one of a two-year project to benefit the residents of Grancare Nursing Center in Green Bay, Wisconsin, took place on JOIN HANDS DAY 2003. NMB's Green Bay Branch 694 partnered with the Boy Scouts, Green Bay area schools, the Volunteer Center, and the Grancare staff for the event.

On June 21, 2003, they transformed what was once a grassy area in the back of the Grancare facility into a beautiful wheelchair accessible garden that could be enjoyed by residents of all abilities. They called it the *Garden of Eden* and put up a trellis at the entrance as a focal

Making Friends while Enriching Lives

Highlights from JOIN HANDS DAY 2004



Rock Valley (WI) Branch 101 teamed up with Boy Scout Troop 108 of Brodhead to clean up Highway 11.



To help Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church with the construction of a new church, Northwoods (WI) Branch 925 partnered with the church's youth group to collect field stones to be used as decorative siding on the outside of the building and for a fireplace inside.

point where residents and guests could sit and enjoy their surroundings.

The *Garden of Eden* turned into much more than a place of eye-catching beauty and color. It became a place that brought joy into the lives of people whose physical abilities had become quite limited.

On JOIN HANDS DAY 2004, branch members and fellow community volunteers carried out phase two of their project to improve the lives of residents at Grancare. With a great idea from a Grancare staff member, project *Garden of Eat-in'* was born.

On May 1, 2004, participants of all ages helped build two wheelchair accessible garden tables and a wheelchair seating area at the Grancare Nursing Center. After construction of the *Garden of Eat-in'* was completed, residents could wheel right up to the planters and begin working in their very own garden.

About JOIN HANDS DAY

This past May 1, thousands of people—youth and seniors alike—gathered across the country to improve their neighborhoods. JOIN HANDS DAY is the only day on the calendar that focuses on the



Above: The ribbon cutting ceremony takes place at the *Garden of Eden*, the wheelchair accessible garden installed by members of Green Bay (WI) Branch 694 and their community partners at Grancare Nursing Center on JOIN HANDS DAY 2003. **Left:** During their 2004 project, Trustee Ruth Stoeckigt looks on as two young volunteers help a Grancare resident plant vegetables in a newly constructed garden table.

development of youth and adult relationships while volunteering.

By creating a partnership from the beginning, youth are able to take a leadership role in helping plan and carry out a project that they would like to see accomplished in their neighborhood. Adults help guide and teach the youth, while at the same time, learn from them and gain an appreciation for the energy and creativeness of their young partners.

If you are interested in learning more about JOIN HANDS DAY, or how you can organize a project in your neighborhood on the first Saturday in May, visit the JOIN HANDS DAY Web site at

www.joinhandsday.org, call the JOIN HANDS DAY Action Center toll-free at 1-877-687-1329, send an e-mail to actioncenter@joinhandsday.org, or call National Mutual Benefit's Fraternal Services Department at 1-800-779-1936, ext. 6093.

Each year, NMB members plan and carry out their own special JOIN HANDS DAY projects. They work to improve the lives of seniors, people with disabilities, children living in poverty, and military personnel to name just a few. Take a look at the photos below of other NMB branches in action on JOIN HANDS DAY 2004! ♦



NMB home office staff and family members joined hands with The Boys & Girls Club of Dane County, Catholic Family Life Insurance, and the Volunteer Center to plant flowers, play bingo, and serve lunch at the Quaker House Apartments for low-income seniors.



New trees and bushes were planted at Story Book Island thanks to members of Girl Scout Troop 108 and Rapid City (SD) Branch 96.



Members of Boy Scout Troop 66 and Oconomowoc (WI) Branch 717 worked together spreading wood chips for a new trail at Clark Farm Nature Center.