

Making It a Day On, Not a Day Off

600 volunteers sign up for MLK Day of Service.

Nine-year-old Shane Laughlin plays Bingo with Melvin Zunn at Culpepper Garden on Monday, Jan. 15. "I'm 87-years-old," Zunn says. The ball spins around and G-58 is called out. "Oh, you got one." Playing Bingo with senior citizens was one of the volunteer opportunities offered at MLK Day of Service sponsored by Volunteer Arlington.



PHOTOS BY
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THE CONNECTION



A table of participants are busy writing letters to active duty service men and women as one of the volunteer choices at Culpepper Garden on Jan. 15. Some of the other opportunities included purchasing items for welcome kits for Bridges to Independence families, cleaning up trash and debris with Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment and assisting with screening immigrants for Just Neighbors.



Five-year-old Matthew Backer, and his 11-year-old brother Daniel, are loading mesh bags with six large carrots each at Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) as part of the volunteer activities for MLK Day of Service. Matthew says this is his first time bagging for AFAC; his brother says he has done it a lot in the past.



Charles Meng, executive director of AFAC, tells the volunteers at MLK Day of Service that AFAC reached 2,376 families last month. "We reach three groups: the unemployed and underemployed, the elderly and the physically and mentally disabled. "They walk among us." Meng says 1,200 come to the site at 2708 S. Nelson Street and others to the 17 distribution sites around Arlington. "They pick up 40 pounds on average per visit."



It is barely over 20 degrees but volunteers are layered and armed with yard tools to remove invasive species on Culpepper Garden grounds for MLK Day of Service. Other outdoor volunteers are cleaning up the resident gardens around the corner.