

## Love You Lots Project: Sunnyside

From my view: Brian Gowan, Mission Houston

I wanted to report several significant observations and testimonies from my view with regards to the **Love You Lots** (LYL) beautification project I participated in on May 12 in the Sunnyside Neighborhood (CSA #32, May 12 2007) ...

- For me, the LYL project was an opportunity to deepen new relationships with leaders in the Sunnyside community that began for me with CityFest Houston. Pastor Kenneth Rose and Mount Vernon Baptist Church volunteers served as the neighborhood LYL host congregation and were a great blessing to the LYL teams. Eight lots in Sunnyside were dramatically transformed in just a few hours by eager volunteers.
- My friend Sandra Massey-Hines, who serves as Sunnyside community liaison with Mayor White's office agreed to ride with me as I made rounds to various lots. She served as my "Sunnyside GPS navigator" for the day. During our rounds, Sandra remarked to me that she was especially blessed and encouraged to see dozens of volunteers converging with yard tools and mowers in her community because a few weeks ago several volunteers had planned to clear some of the lots, but were rained out. Sandra smiled and remarked that "God organized you all to come here and work as His beautification back-up plan! You all are working on many of the same lots we decided needed to be cleaned up. Isn't God good?"
- One LYL Sunnyside neighbor, Mrs Waters was elated about the lot being cleaned up next to her home. She said "We have lived here for 4 years and my husband has dementia. We have had snakes and rats come into our yard from that lot over the years. We have been reluctant to allow our grandchildren to play in the yard, or sit on the porch. It has been awful. I cannot thank you all enough for what you did to help our family today. God bless you!"
- One volunteer team brought in a huge John Deer tractor and large riding lawn mower to take care of 2 lots. After they finished transforming their lots, the team leader commented: "I hope this is just the beginning of more united service projects like this to come. We need to keep talking about this kind of thing. What a wonderful day this has been!"
- Several volunteers commented on how good it was to pray together, realizing a need for both physical and spiritual renewal in our own lives as well as the life of the community. One LYL team leader reported that from the debris they picked up, it was obvious their lot was a "crime scene/sin scene" location. Physical and spiritual cleansing was needed that day.
- Eight men from a local homeless shelter volunteered to help clean up a sizeable lot. A LYL team leader commented on how empowered these men were that morning to be making a tangible difference in someone's life!

### In short...

Lots and lots of lots were transformed, new friends were made, lives were encouraged, and God "got a kick" out of watching His people work together... Encore!