

On September 13, 2011, over two hundred fifth and sixth graders set out at 8:45 a.m. to do community service at the Ogden Memorial Cemetery. We chose this project based on the need expressed from the Mayor's Office for Civic Affairs. The Ogden City Cemetery is the oldest cemetery within Ogden's city limits. The first burial was in 1851 and it is still in use. The cemetery needs cleanup in fall to remove the pine needles, pine cones, and debris left from heavy rains and shedding trees.

The students walked from their school site, 2221 Grant Avenue, to the cemetery at 1875 Monroe Boulevard. The walk took about 15 minutes due to the large number of students involved. We were greeted by the caretakers who gave us a little history of the cemetery and answered student questions. At the end of questions students were broken into small groups of 5 and issued protective gloves, rakes, shovels, and trash bags. The groups were assigned areas to clean up.

At the end of the cleanup project the head caretaker told us that out of all the volunteers who come and work at the cemetery, he never experienced a group that worked so hard and did such an effective job of cleaning up.

The students were surveyed to see if this was a meaningful project for them. All the students indicated that they wanted to do this again next year. They took pride in contributing to their community. They also had an opportunity to read headstones and were moved by some of the ages of children buried in the cemetery.

We plan on repeating this experience next year.

Kathy Thornburg