



## Northwest suburban communities pitch in to beautify towns

By Kimberly Pohl | Daily Herald Staff

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One Northwest suburban property management company is starting a program aimed not just at growing plants and trees, but a sense of pride and community among its residents.

Rowell Inc., a 37-year-old firm that manages about 30 single-family home, townhouse and condominium complexes, will work to beautify four of its properties beginning with the Glens of Hanover on Saturday.

The Rowell staff has invited owners, renters, police and village officials to help plant an array of bushes, perennials and trees as part of the company's new "Pay It Forward" program. Landscaping contractors and local merchants have been making donations.

"Our hope is that people will get involved, care more for their community and pay it forward to their own neighbors, even if it's something as simple as helping weed a garden," assistant manager Christine Kott said. "This is a way of giving back."

The idea came to Rowell owner Kara Cermak and employees after they participated in Landmark Education's Self-Expression and Leadership Program, a course that encourages people to be leaders and make a difference.

In addition to the Glens of Hanover at Lake Street and Bear Flag Drive, the other three developments targeted this spring and summer are Hidden Pond and Weathersfield in Schaumburg, and Windhaven in Palatine.

A couple Hanover Park police officers plan on attending the planting event as part of the department's community policing initiative, which Chief David Webb stepped up in response to a spike in violent and gang-related crime.

"We had a couple of busy years where we sometimes had difficulties getting information from people," Deputy Police Chief Tom Cortese said. "The community wasn't as responsive to us because our sole philosophy was law enforcement, whereas now we try to have positive interaction on a day-to-day basis and help solve livability issues."

Carole Engstrom, a Rowell on-site manager in Palatine, said no community is immune to crime and gangs, and that it's important for residents to see police in a nonaggressive manner.

"We've committed to enhancing our communities and I've found that residents walk a little taller they help beautify their homes, and when leaders take time to visit their homes," Engstrom said.