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Youth offenders take overnight trip to learn valuable skills

Arapahoe County's Organized Youth Work Project for offenders a success

Littleton, Colo --- Juveniles age 17 and younger, court-ordered to do community service, have difficulty finding organizations that are willing to take a chance on them. Just a year ago, Arapahoe County's Judicial Services Division began a unique program that helps these youth complete their community services hours and develop skills that will help them be successful in the future.

Historically, many organizations don't have the staffing available to supervise and monitor juvenile offenders as they complete their community service hours. The Organized Work Project creates supervised work opportunities, helping youth meet and complete their sentences.

The youth offenders (those with curfew, traffic and other violations) complete a variety of projects from helping out with soup kitchens, performing a multitude of office duties, such as stuffing and labeling envelopes, or getting dirty while beautifying the County's natural resources. Through hands-on projects, youth learn valuable vocational skills and experience life long lessons.

Working in collaboration with Volunteers of Outdoor Colorado, Arapahoe County organized their first ever overnight Organized Work Project in August. Three male juvenile offenders worked on the Blue River Wildlife Trail in Summit County. They learned how to reroute new trails, build and repair bridges and install new drainage structures. Due to its success, a second overnight trip is scheduled for later this month to tackle and rebuild the Lily Pad Lake Trail in Summit County.

"I wouldn't trade my Saturday's for anything," said Denise Holter, Arapahoe County Judicial Services Officer. "Just seeing the change in the way these kids see the world and the pride they take in their work makes it all worth it.

We are constantly looking for new work projects for these kids," she added. "If there is an organization with a need, let's create a project that is rewarding and teaches these kids the skills or values they need to be successful in life."

If you are interested in setting up an Organized Work Project with Arapahoe County, call Holter at 303-636-1971.

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To download the new logo click on the following link: [ftp://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Pub/CA/](http://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Pub/CA/)

Caption: Youth offenders complete community services hours by building bridges to preserve the natural habitat of the Blue River Wildlife Trail, thanks to Arapahoe County's Organized Work Project.