

THE DINUBA SENTINEL^{COM}

NEWS

YMI partners with Peña's disposal

Youth get work experience and earn some money

By Keven J. Geaney

Published: Thursday, August 21, 2014 3:17 PM PDT

Print Page

Sentinel staff

Members of the Young Men's Initiative [YMI] partnered with Peña's Disposal to replace split recycling containers with two new containers [blue for recyclables and green for yard waste] at more than 10,000 residences in the Dinuba area.

The family-owned Peña's Disposal gave the program \$10,000 for the work.

"I want to thank Peña's for giving these young men the opportunity to work and build leadership skills," YMI founder Eddie Valero said at Peña's Disposal. "I echo what Gabe Peña said. I feel this is a win, win situation for both of us. It was an opportunity for the youth to get work experience."

Art Peña said that the project was supposed to take four weeks, but the 13 YMI members finished the job in three weeks. They worked from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Peña said that his company figured out how much they would have to pay someone at \$9 an hour to do the work and added some more money to help out the organization.

"These kids got up at the crack of dawn and worked hard to get the project completed ahead of schedule," Valero said.

Valero said that he was going to give the teens a stipend of \$50 a day out of the \$10,000 for their hard work. He added that they would receive between \$500 to \$650 for the three weeks, depending on how many days they worked.

The remaining \$2,000 to \$3,000 will be used to pay for events the YMI members attend.

"On my behalf, thanks to all of you," Gabe Peña said.

Art Peña added, "I especially want to thank Eddie for giving these kids leadership skills and for showing us that they can do the job."

Valero then asked the YMI members to tell the Peñas what they learned from this experience.

Orosi High School graduate Andrew Alvarez said that the project was challenging, especially getting up really early. But he was happy that they accomplished their goal.

"It's great to accomplish a goal, but it's even better to start a new one," Alvarez said. "I'm looking forward to the next goal."

Orosi High junior Diego Meza said that doing the project together, as a team, made the work get completed ahead of schedule.

Junior Juan Robles said that each one of them pushed the other to move faster, which helped them finish a week early.

Other YMI members stated that the project is good work experience and built good communication skills.

Cutler-Orosi Joint Unified School District Superintendent Yolanda Valdez met with the YMI members at Peña's Disposal to congratulate the youth for completing their project. She also thanked Peña's Disposal.

"I am in awe," Valdez said. "This was an impressive project. What you guys were sharing went with our school district's mission and vision. Our purpose is to get you ready for college and career. An employer told me that the two main things he wants to see from an employee is to be at work on time and to be successful at work. You showed us that you are ethical American citizens, great communicators and great collaborators."

Valdez told Gabe Peña that she hopes this is one of many partnerships between the school district and businesses in the community.

She also thanked Valero for developing young, courageous males in the community.

Copyright © 2014 - Dinuba Sentinel

[\[x\] Close Window](#)