Atkinson Community Services Center in Coatesville Hosts 100-Plus Volunteers for Day of Service

By Mark Hostutler

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The Brandywine Health Foundation joined the W.C. Atkinson Memorial Community Services Center, which sponsored and hosted more than 25 faith institutions, nonprofits, and donors who came out to the 25th Annual Greater Philadelphia Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service in Coatesville.

The vision of Minnie McNeil and her husband was realized on Monday, when more than 115 volunteers and 15 veterans came together from all walks of life to dedicate their time to celebrate not only the life of Dr. King but also join forces to participate in a Community Clean-up Project. The project targeted Seventh to Ninth avenues on Chestnut and Diamond streets and Lumber and Merchant streets to the north of Chestnut Street.
Mrs. McNeil’s vision embraces environmental stewardship that is generated by the community. It is rooted in the values of community health, safety, aesthetics, and pride.

The day began with the assembling of more than 100 backpacks for homeless men. Through generous donations, backpacks were filled with toiletries, socks, note pads, pens, washcloths, and a handwritten personal note card with words of encouragement and inspirations by the volunteers. Atkinson Center and City Gate residents received the backpacks as a small token of kindness.

The day also included the cleaning of unwanted debris like old mattresses, tires, trash, and furniture and hauling it into dumpsters, along with cutting down low-hanging trees and sweeping the streets. The Hutchinson Memorial UAME Church served the many volunteers with warm beverages and snacks (generously provided by the Chester County Food Bank) and gracious hospitality.