

Good neighbors makes good fences

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Napa's wine industry is famously generous in supporting the local community, from the grants generated by the Napa Valley Vintners for health and youth causes to the bottles of wine for local school and charity events.

Wine industry employees also donate in more personal ways. One great recent example is how employees of Stag's Leap Wine Cellars and Silverado Farming Company worked together to build a needed fence for Vine Village.

They were joined by Central Valley Building Supply, itself an integral part of the wine industry in Napa Valley.

Vine Village was founded in 1973 by George and Grace Kerson and Dante Bagnani, who had developmentally disabled children; the organization is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year.

Vine Village has just planted a large orchard and garden on the property on Old Sonoma Road. It contains 185 fruit trees — everything from apples, prune plums, citrus, peaches — and they are planning to plant vegetables soon.

For now, the fruit and vegetables grown on the property will help feed their 25 Vine Village residents as well as the 20 art participants who come Monday to Friday as part of the Vine Village Day Program based around the arts and rural life.

Down the road, they hope to sell the excess produce at a fruit stand.

Now that they've planted the orchard, they need to protect it and the future vegetables from the animals in the area. That's where Stag's Leap Wine Cellars helped in. They joined the other partners to build a fence to protect the orchard and garden.

This is a big project as the Stag's Leap Wine Cellars team had to tear down the old, dilapidated fence and clear away all the undergrowth to prepare the area for a new fence. The team committed to helping with financial support, project management, finding partners on board and arranging two volunteer days when winery employees could help complete the work.

Kirk Grace, Stag's Leap Wine Cellars' director of vineyard operations, has taken the lead for the project with Esau Escobedo and Luis Trejo from the company.

Silverado Farming is helping with the labor to put up the new fence, and Central Valley Builder Supply donated some materials and also discount other materials for the project.

The first Stag's Leap Wine Cellars Volunteer Day was Saturday, April 6, when about a dozen people helped with the preparation.

They hope to complete the work in late July 27, just a week before Vine Village holds its

celebration gala.

Meanwhile, Vine Village is preparing for its 40th anniversary gala on Aug. 4, "A Day in the Country."

You can learn more about Vine Village and the gala at vinevillage.org or by calling 255-4006.

Upcoming conferences for the wine industry

Napa Valley Grapegrowers present Ahead of the Curve – Napa Valley 2030 at Silverado Resort on Tuesday, May 7 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Visit www.napagrowers.org for details.

The Wine Industry Symposium Group holds its 18th annual Vineyard Economics Seminar on Thursday, May 23, at the Napa Valley Marriott. Get details at www.winesymposium.com.

UC Davis Extension holds its 22nd annual OIV Wine Marketing Program July 15-26, in Davis. For details, visit extension.ucdavis.edu/winemaking.

Email Paul Franson at paul@paulfranson.com.