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Elle Seiden (right), 10, and Sarah Sarowitz, 10, both of Highland Park, give out samples of soup at the King Day of Service. Volunteers created bags of ingredients for the Moraine Township Food Pantry. | RYAN PAGEDLOW-SUN-TIMES MEDIA

Day of Service options abound

BY KAREN BERKOWITZ

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HIGHLAND PARK — Hundreds of adults and children heeded Martin Luther King Jr.'s call to service by spending a few hours at the Highland Park Recreation Center doing something for someone else.

There were projects to brighten the days of hospitalized children, soldiers overseas, families living in homeless shelters and those trying to stretch their food dollar — to name just a few. More than two dozen organizations sponsored workstations to benefit various causes.

"We thought it would be a great way for the kids to help out, and do something on their day off other than just play," said Jennifer Meyers, a Highland Park mother who participated in the Day of Service with her

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son, Jack, and his friend, Spencer Nguyen. They assembled packages of toiletries for homeless shelters and wrote letters of appreciation to children of military families.

On Tuesday, organizer Cheryl Levi reported that 1,000 people attended the Day of Service. All told, 120 volunteers from organizations such as Americorps, Habitat for Humanity, Northwestern University and the community assisted in the effort.

The Red Oak School Parent Teacher Organization sponsored one workstation where helpers were invited to scoop dry soup ingredients into plastic bags for distribution through the Moraine Township Food Bank. Each bag included measured proportions of barley, split peas, brown rice and lentils along with a recipe for preparing the soup with bouillon cubes, onion, carrots, celery and seasonings.

The Wayne Thomas School PTO invited youngsters to color tablecloths for USO organizations, while the Braeside School PTO made it possible to create a Valentine for a soldier through Operation Support Our Troops.

At one table, children used bright-colored markers to decorate paper flower petals for miniature flower pots destined for patients at Highland Park Hospital.