

Inside City Hall

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Flowers amid the stench

Brodie Fenlon

As the municipal workers' strike drags on, I find myself thinking often of Veich Jarrett. I met Mr. Jarrett on Day 1 of the strike outside Trimbee Court, an apartment building run by Toronto Community Housing on Denarda Rd. It's also home to the Trimbee Infant Resource Centre, where 20 infants and toddlers are cared for during the day by staff with Toronto's Children's Services.

The Weston neighbourhood was my first stop because there are four city-run childcare centres, including Trimbee, within a few blocks of each other. Say what you will about garbage collection and dumps in parks, no one has been more inconvenienced by the strike than parents with young children at the city's 57 daycares.

It was 7:30 a.m. when I arrived and Mr. Jarrett was already outside, planting hundreds of flowers in beds that ran along the front of the building and beside a walkway. There were pansies, daisies, petunias and gazanias, all donated as part of a city beautification program. Mr. Jarrett, who tutors students in the building, had volunteered to plant them.

This type of work is not new for Mr. Jarrett, who won a community service volunteer award in 2006 ([click here](#) for a picture of him with Mayor David Miller and Ward 11 Councillor Frances Nunziata)

When there's ugliness on the picket lines, confrontations at the temporary dumps, or angry, inflammatory rhetoric on the call-in shows and online comments, I think of Mr. Jarrett, a warm smile on his face, quietly working on his own to time to make Toronto a better place.

He could he teach us all a thing or two about public service.