

# WHAT GOES AROUND, COMES AROUND



YardApes' Owner Shayne Newman chats with Parks & Rec committee members and the New Milford mayor.

YardApes' Shayne Newman is a big believer in good karma, and that's why his investment in community service marketing has yielded great return — in more ways than one.

BY **NICOLE WISNIEWSKI** EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

SOME PEOPLE think Shayne Newman is a mastermind when planning community service and gaining recognition for his New Milford, CT-based company, YardApes.

"They think I know it all when it comes to these events," says the incoming president of the Professional Landcare Network Day of Service Committee. On a recent PLANET Webinar on the topic, moderator and industry consultant Jeffrey Scott even called Newman a

*continued on page 24*

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continued from page 22  
community service “rock star.”

What’s his *real* trick? “I just get lucky,” says Newman, crossing his arms over his chest and shrugging his shoulders. He squints in the sun at his team of 12 working in khakis and blue, white and green PLANET Day of Service shirts at a town playground on April 22. It’s a cloudless,



Spread the love: YardApes’ crewmembers shovel topsoil and plant turf seed.

### FIELD REPORT #3:

**Children’s Playground**  
New Milford, CT

**Day of Service Mission:**

YardApes donated their time and energy to move 60 yards of topsoil, plant turf and install a paver patio at a children’s park in Connecticut.

70-degree day. One couldn’t ask for a better morning to move mulch and 60 yards of topsoil, plant turf seed and install a paver patio walkway in a children’s park that needs some attention.

On this Earth Day, Newman donates services worth \$7,000 to the community park. And where this “luck” is concerned, Newman is on a winning streak.

**Instant karma**

Five years ago, when he held his first community golf fundraiser, Newman raised \$10,000 for his charity and maxed out at 120 golfers. Last year, on his first PLANET Day of Service, Newman’s event was featured on the front page of the local garden club’s newsletter — as well as the local daily newspaper. This year, because the playground is a hot-button issue in the town, reporters showed up again.

Also in attendance is New Milford Mayor Patricia Murphy, as well as Dan Calhoun and Eleanor Covelli — the director and assistant director of the Parks & Recreation Department, respectively. As this trio and several members of the media survey the project while the crew works, Newman talks to them with ease about the park

*continued on page 27*

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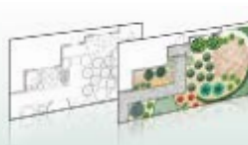
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## COVER STORY



Laying the groundwork: Workers meticulously lay the paver pattern, above, and a crewmember's son, right, enjoys the playground after the hard work is done.

*continued from page 24*

maintenance, as well as other projects that need assistance. It's certainly not bad company to keep when you're a landscape contractor.

"Yeah, that was pretty cool that the mayor showed up," Newman says, nonchalantly.

There's one theory Newman uses to explain this good fortune. Deep pockets? No. Political agenda? No. Ingenious planning? A little. Right place, right time? Maybe. However, Newman says he can sum it up with just one word: Karma.

"I believe that if I do good things then good things will come back to me," he says. "It might not be today or tomorrow, but somewhere down the line it will pay off."

That's when you see it. The immense pride. Newman swells with it as he watches his crew in action while juggling reporters' questions and mingling with the mayor.

"We are working on two projects today, and 15 of my 17 guys volunteered to help — unpaid," he says, beaming.

This fact you wouldn't know off-hand. The crew is as focused as usual. Crewmembers Ramiro Parra and Franklin Guaman, who were installing the paver patio walkway, are meticulous in their laying of the pattern — a design that duly impressed the mayor. Just a normal day's work? Hardly.

"My wife and kids come here all the time, and people in town will know we did this. It has to be perfect," Parra



says to Newman.

And it is — down to the last brick engraved with a special message: "Walkway Donated by YardApes Landscaping."

Though Newman hasn't crunched the numbers on exactly the type of return-on-investment this community service event will provide, he knows there is value he can't compute. After all, how much could you pay for the front page of the local daily paper? What price can you put on more than an hour of undivided attention from the city mayor? What about employee excitement and pride? Or the number of current and potential clients who say they saw what YardApes did for the community?

"I'm a numbers person, and I can get really into the processes," Newman admits, taking a bite of the pizza he provided his crew for lunch. "But I try not to get too wrapped up in numbers during Day of Service.

"It would take away from the good feeling I get just by giving back," Newman says, "and that is bigger for me than anything I could get back monetarily." **LM**

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