

Getting their hands dirty

by Jennaye Derge

For the last three weeks, Southwest Conservation Corps has been testing out a new program entitled "Farm Corps," which sets its sights on getting teens from the Four Corners area outside and into the garden. The teen-agers, mostly high school students, receive a work stipend throughout the time



Corps member Tristan Joe sands the new tables of the gazebo.

served and an education stipend once the program is over. This summer's pilot program is focusing on the park at Mesa Elementary School in Cortez, where a group of corps members, volunteers and two crew leaders have stepped up to build a garden park behind the school. The project in-

cludes a new garden shed, a freshly painted gazebo with repurposed benches, and an outdoor wood-burning cob oven. The future is bright for the park, which will soon include vegetable and flower beds, composting and trails for the community. It is hoped that the pilot program will only be the beginning, with future projects so more kids and more of the community can get out and plant better futures.



Members and volunteers make sure the new outdoor oven is level.



The crew works in the new Mesa Elementary garden on a warm Tuesday afternoon.



SCC crew leader Megan Archer secures screws in the bottom on a new bench.