



HerculesPatch

VOLUNTEERS IN THE NEWS

Stuff-a-Bus With Canned Food

WestCAT transit authority is hosting a holiday food drive on Friday, complete with Santa and a fully decorated bus.

By **Jennifer Baires** December 8, 2010

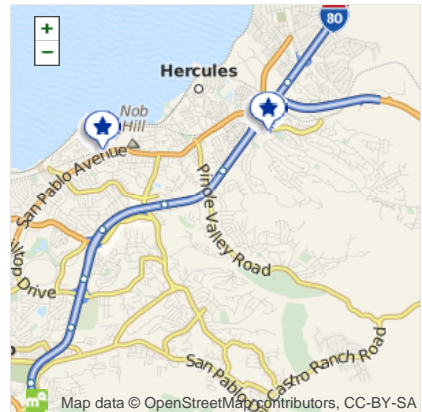
The traditional Santa Claus rides a sleigh pulled by reindeer, but the WestCAT transit agency's Santa prefers a 40-foot bus.

This Friday, in the Lucky Supermarket parking lot, that bus will be decorated and ready for its annual stuffing. WestCAT hosts the holiday food drive event, known as Stuff-A-Bus, as part of its outreach efforts for the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties.

Yvonne Morrow, the marketing coordinator at WestCAT, has organized the event for the last six years. Morrow said filling the bus has been tougher the last couple of years, but it is still her favorite event. "I love it! I look forward to it every year; I was out buying Santa a new suit today. I love being able to do something for the community and it's nice to see people smile and see how generous they are even though it's such a hard time right now—for everyone."



PHOTOS (2)



Overall donations to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties are steady, if not slightly increasing from last year said Lisa Sherrill, Community Relations Manager at the Food Bank. "The problem is that the need continues to rise." We've been trying to get the word out about the increase in the need, too," said Sherrill.

Cans collected at this event will be distributed through the Food Bank as emergency grocery bags for families, provided to daycares to help feed hungry children and served in shelters as a hot meal. Sherrill said, "Protein items such as peanut butter, canned chicken/tuna and beans are most needed because they are more expensive foods but very important to a diet."

Last year WestCAT collected about 450 pounds of food. Most of the advertising at that time was done through word of mouth. This year, they are hoping to beat that number and have promoted the event with bulletin boards inside their busses, around the community and on the WestCAT website.

Even more than attractive signs or web advertising, Morrow said that what really gets people to donate is the man in the Santa suit—Michael Herndon. Herndon, a Crockett resident, will reprise the role of Santa this year after scheduling conflicts prevented him from doing it last year. He said his trick to getting people to donate is simple, "Santa has to be active, pro active and go to the people. I would say 90% of the people get involved and are able to give something. After all, how can you turn down Santa?"

Santa will be out from 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm and as further incentive to donate WestCAT will give away a \$20 local stored value bus pass.

WestCAT is accepting food donations through December 17 at their office located at: 601 Walter Avenue in Pinole, Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Are you planning on participating in the food drive? What do you think about these types of outreach events? [Tell us in the comments.](#)



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