

St. Patrick-St. Vincent student body donates two tons of food

Donation will provide 3,613 meals

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Each day, students at St. Patrick-St. Vincent High School walk by a sign framed on the outside of one of the school buildings.

The sign quotes the Bible verse, John 13:34: "Love one another."

The students heeded that message by donating almost 5,000 pounds — more than 2 tons — of food items to the Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano during the past two-and-a-half weeks.

That's a lot of love.

Food bank representatives picked up the food Tuesday morning, deploying two large cardboard totes to handle all the additional food items that wouldn't fit in the 13 overflowing food barrels.

"I love it," said Michelle Balingit, SPSV's Director of Student Activities. "It's so nice to see the faces of the workers who come to pick up the food after each drive. They are usually shocked (by the amount of food collected)."

Balingit said that the holiday food drive is an annual event at the school, as the students "try to beat the goal from the previous year."

For this year's food drive, the freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior classes were pitted against each other for bragging rights, as four large paper hearts were displayed in one of the buildings, measuring the progress of each class.

A nearby sign reminded students that a food donation would "feed a soul (and help) fill a heart."

"One thing that our high school does is push us forward to help our community, to help other people out," said SPSV Student Council Treasurer Matthew Coe. "We know that the Solano Food Bank needs help, (food donations) can really impact our community, so why not help the people in need?"

Fellow junior Ingrid Brekke, concurred.

"We see all this food and we know it will go to helping people," she said.

Brekke, the junior class treasure, said the competition between the classes helped bring in more food.

Junior Amora Haynes noticed that the food drive helped to bring the school together.

"It's really amazing to see all our school came together for a great cause," said Hayes, who is also the SPSV Student Council Activities Commissioner. "You see that no one is being selfish about this and everyone worked together."

"It was amazing, but I'm never surprised by the amount of food donated each year by the students (of SPSV)," said Sharon Zeppegno.

Zeppegno, the manager of volunteer services at the Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano, was on hand during the food donation pick up, marveling at all the food collected. She said that loved the fact that a reward was not given to the classes or to individual donors because the reward is in donating for a good cause.

Zeppegno confirmed later in the day that the 4,817 pounds raised by the students would be enough to provide 3,613 meals for those in need.

She said that the food bank serves around 188,000 individuals each month so food donations are really needed.

"A thing like this," Zeppegno said pointing to the filled barrels and the two cardboard totes. "Makes a huge difference."