

# EAST BAY TIMES

## Around East County: Scout helps food bank for Eagle project

Donation barrels redesigned, locations for them sought throughout Contra Costa

While COVID 19's restrictions and quarantines have shut down most activities throughout East County for children and teens, one young man from Antioch is still working to do good for his community. Knowing that there are many in need during the pandemic, Antioch's Robbie Baker, 18, decided to dedicate his Eagle Scout project to creating a way for people to donate to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

Using barrels provided by the food bank, Baker developed a way to draw more attention to the barrels by building them higher and adding more color and information to convince people to donate.

"The final ranking in Boy Scouts is an Eagle Scout," Baker explained. "We are required to do a community service project that is lasting, affects a decent size of the community and is self-sustaining."

Once the barrels were decorated, Baker worked to find public areas to place them where people could make donations. Although he lives in Antioch and the Scout troop he attends is there too, Baker hopes to set up boxes throughout the county. His first box is set up at the Golden Star Market, 44 W. 10th St. in Pittsburg. There, shoppers can buy food that can be added to the barrel placed in the front of the store after checkout.



*For his Eagle Scout project, Antioch's Robbie Baker, 18, decided to help the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano by improving barrels provided by the food bank to convince people to donate and finding public areas to place them in. Baker appears above with Ahmad (no last name given), the owner of Pittsburg's Golden Star Market, and one of the donation barrels. (photo courtesy of Sharyn Baker)*

Now that the contact is made and the specially decorated barrel is set up at the market, Baker said that the donations can go on indefinitely or as long as the market owners will allow the barrel to stay. Keeping the project self-sustainable, Baker has arranged for the donated food to be collected by food bank organizers when the barrel fills up.

This isn't the only location that Baker would like to see the food collection barrels placed. He is hoping to encourage other grocery stores and businesses to each host a barrel at their locations. He said that he has tried some of the larger grocery stores but has found that there is a lot of red tape involved with dealing with corporations. Smaller venues are easier.

“Actually, I think that smaller stores are not only more receptive to adding the barrels, but those who donate feel like they're donating to their community and it's more locally based,” he said. “This turned out to be a happy accident.”

Baker said this is just one of the projects that has been going on in his Scout troop over the past few months. Antioch's Troop 247 has been meeting online and practicing social distancing during small-group activities since the pandemic began. Even so, Baker says that the troop has lost some members and is working on recruiting new ones. The troop's meetings are being held online. If members choose to attend in-person activities, social distancing is practiced and everyone is kept safe. For information on Troop 247, go to [troopwebhost.org/Troop247Antioch](http://troopwebhost.org/Troop247Antioch). For those interested in hosting a food collection spot in their business to help Baker with his Eagle project, he can be reached at [robbiewbaker@gmail.com](mailto:robbiewbaker@gmail.com).

**School supply donations:** While this is far from a normal school year with students experiencing distance learning instead of heading to the classrooms, there will still be students in need of school supplies. That's why organizer Claryssa Wilson will bring back, for the ninth year, the “Stuff This Bus” school supply giveaway program.

The event will take place Aug. 15 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parking lot of Somersville Towne Center at 2550 Somersville Road in Antioch. To stay within county health regulations, social-distance rules and face coverings are mandatory, and the organizer will offer a grab-and-go service.

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