

Gray: Food drive for children very successful this year

Contributed by Lorrie Gray
Monday, 04 August 2008

On behalf of the Lake County Hunger Task Force I would like to publicly acknowledge and thank all of the individuals and businesses who made our "Cans For Our Kids" food drive so successful. The collection of non-perishable food items was held on May 17 in conjunction with Konocti Kids' Day at Austin Park in Clearlake.

A large round of applause goes to George Feola of Bicoastal Media, who sent the mobile broadcast unit for radio station KXBX to keep a running count of donations, and urge listeners to come to the park and enjoy the event. They also provided pre-publicity for the food drive on all of their radio stations for several weeks.

Special thanks to Paul Thomas and his sound engineer for their talents and time. Because of your on air promotion, the wonderful group of folks from Tree of Life arrived with over 1,000 pounds of food toward the cause. Words alone really can not express how much that meant to us.

It might surprise some of you to know that summer is the hungriest time of year for many families. That is because those kids who are eligible for reduced rate or free lunches are not in school, and therefore not getting that meal. Our goal for the day was to collect 10,000 items, specifically for those kids, and although we fell short of that number, we had sufficient donations to supply 30 Lake County families with food to help them bridge the summer gap.

Thanks go to the Clearlake Rotary Club for making a cash donation that we turned into 146 items. Thank you to the individuals who took the time and effort to drop off any number of items, from one to one hundred.

Many thanks to the Lake County Record Bee for including our food drive in the community events calendar, as well as printing an article publicizing the effort. Additionally, thanks to the Lake County News online for printing our article.

All these things counted up to a successful first annual "Cans For Our Kids";

Many thanks to the Lake County Community Action Agency who loaned us their lift gate truck for our collection point, and their ever capable driver Jim for his time on his day off.

Thanks to the Lake County Office of Education for the warehouse space for short-term storage, as well as their Healthy Start program members for sorting and delivering the donations to the appropriate families.

Thank you to Tammy Alakszay of First 5 California for coordination our efforts, and her AmeriCorps members for their assistance.

Enormous thanks to my sister, Kerry Ellis, for driving up from the Bay Area to spend the day in the back of the truck, when the temperature outside was 103 degrees.

Without the aid of our own Hunger Task Force members Bev Bergstrom, Dianna Brooks, Ginger Frank and Hedy Montoya, who ran our booth for the kids' activities, the day would have been a lot less fun.

Thanks also to Mary Sherman and her Konocti Kids' Day organizing committee for letting us piggy-back our food drive onto the event. We appreciated your cooperation.

Finally, thanks to Mayor Curt Giamb Bruno and the Clearlake Public Works Department for the barricades and making our collection point safe and secure.

Thanks again, everyone. See you in 2009.

Lorrie Gray is a member of the Lake County Hunger Task Force. She lives in Kelseyville.

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