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Thursday, December 22, 2022

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Published by J-Ad Graphics, Inc.

(269) 945-9554 • 1351 N. M-43 Highway • Hastings, MI 49058-0188

This publication
printed on 50%
recycled paper



Making spirits bright:
Pennfield Lions Club showers gifts on 43 families
(See story, inside)

Pennfield Lions feed, gift 43 families for Christmas

Shelly Kehrle-Sulser
Executive Editor

Pennfield Middle School's gym became a lion's den Saturday filled with food, gifts and big hearted "cats" who busily organized and whisked away the spoils.

In simpler terms, the Pennfield Lions Club members volunteered their day to assemble and deliver Christmas gift baskets to 43 Pennfield area families in need.

"I'm just excited," said Laura Thurman, mother of a Purdy second grader, who received a delivery from Lion John Chmiel. "It's nice that you guys do this stuff for people. Very appreciative of it."

Gift boxes included toys purchased specifically for each child by the Lion's Club members, along with canned goods collected by Pennfield school district students and community members, and perishable foods such as ham, eggs and milk.

Families also received paper products, snacks, dinner rolls, potatoes, stuffing, apple sauce and more.

According to Lion's Club member Terry Ensign, Pennfield classrooms also raise money for the annual



Pennfield Lion Allan Shepard of Battle Creek loads his vehicle with surprises for one area family before delivering them Saturday.

effort.

"When they have social functions like dances, you have to bring a canned good to get in," said Ensign. "And, that's how they collect them during the year."

The entire combined

effort between the club and the schools begins as soon as school starts each year, said Ensign.

"Everyone (Lion) is assigned a family and you've got to buy a gift for the kids in the family," said Ensign.

Club President Larry Boyer said former superintendent Tim Everett is the project chairman, serving as liaison between the schools and the club for the past 15 years.

"I work with the schools and we ask them to I.D. families that might be in need and they contact them to see if they're interested in a basket," said Everett, "and if they are, they give the names to us. My role is go-between,



Members of the Pennfield Lions Club along with their families and friends combined efforts Saturday morning to deliver the Christmas baskets of food and gifts they have been collecting since the start of the school year with the help of Pennfield Public Schools. (Shopper News photos by Shelly Kehrle-Sulser)



The Lions Club used the gym at Pennfield Middle School to sort the supplies, from non-perishable to perishable foods plus gifts by family before making deliveries on Saturday to residents in need in the Pennfield school district.

getting Lions to sponsor a family."

Besides delivering a basket, Everett also kept busy on Saturday checking in all of the members who volunteered to help.

"I've been in the Lions Club going on 20 years," said Boyer. "We just have always done it. A lot of us used to be teachers, administrators at the school. This is a collaboration with the schools and this all here is raised by the kids."

The Dunlap and Pennfield Middle School classroom "penny wars", he said, generated around \$1,100 toward gift purchases, he said.

The club also operates a variety of other fund raisers that help pay for not only the toys but the nearly \$4,000 in perishable food items.

"It's just one of our projects for Pennfield Lions," said Boyer. "There's families of eight down to families of three. With 43 families, you're talking almost 150

people."

Boyer, a retired athletic director and teacher, said families express a range of responses upon receiving the much needed holiday help.

"Most of them are so shocked and surprised and so happy," said Boyer, noting that the families are recommended to them by the schools. "Most of them do know we're coming because we call them ahead of time

Continued next page

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AND ON MONDAY, JANUARY 2, 2023
Have Safe and Happy Holidays

Cover Deadline: News Classifieds: Tuesday 4pm

B.C. restaurants raise \$32,000 for American Cancer Society program



One Nation Tap & Table and Lucky Rooster Kitchen & Cocktails raised \$32,060.73 to support the American Cancer Society's fight against breast cancer.

Local restaurants One Nation Tap & Table and Lucky Rooster Kitchen & Cocktails raised \$32,060.73 this past October to support the American Cancer Society's fight against breast cancer.

They were joined by community members and organizations in an effort to surpass last year's total of \$25,000 and "end breast cancer as we know it," said Katie Jones, spokesperson for the American Cancer Society.

Funds were raised through sales of specially designed pink drinks and desserts, themed give-back nights, merchandise sales, car shows and more.

The restaurants' owner, Stephen Titus, and his family

began fundraising for the American Cancer Society in 2011 after his mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. She is now an 11-year survivor.

"We are so grateful to the employees, families and friends who partner with us in the fight," said Jones. "You are helping raise funds for the American Cancer Society to provide more services, such as our local Road to Recovery program, more research and more hope to those who need it the most."

Jones added, "Making Strides Against Breast Cancer celebrates survivors and thrivers, funds lifesaving breast cancer research, and is committed to advancing health equity through pro-

grams and services."

Dollars raised help the Society fund innovative breast cancer research; provide education and guidance to help people reduce their risk; and offer comprehensive patient support to those who need it most.

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PENNFIELD LIONS Continued from previous page



John Chmiel of the Pennfield Lions Club, owner of John Chmiel State Farm Agency in Battle Creek, hands over one of many bags and boxes of food and gifts for the family of Laura Thurman in Pennfield Township.

but the amount we give them and what we give them, they're just very happy."

Boyer said it's "pretty special" when he gets to see the happiness expressed by the children receiving their gifts from the club.

"This is the fun part of being in the Lions," said Boyer. "We get a lot of cards back from people thanking us. The big thing is, when we stand out at Family Fare or Shell Station, some of our biggest supporters, and do our fund raisers out there, so many people walk up and say, 'you did this for me' and donate some money. Pay it forward."

The club not only receives referrals from the schools, like they did for the Thurmans, but the Salvation Army helps

connect the club with people who could benefit from the gifts.

The club has more than 40 active members and according to Ensign, every one of them turns out to help with the deliveries.

"We think there's a need and we like to support the community," said Ensign. "We raise money all year long and this is one way we give back to the community. This is one of the major ways we can impact and help a lot of people."

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