

WVDP Food Drive exceeds its goal



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Volunteers from the West Valley Demonstration Project prepare to load and deliver 102,000 pounds of food to nine local pantries right before the holiday.

WEST VALLEY – The workforce at the West Valley Demonstration Project completed its Annual Food Drive on Nov. 16, as part of its continued commitment to the community. The annual tradition began in 1989, and has been held every year since. In total, the WVDP Food Drive has collected approximately 1.7 million pounds of food since its inception.

The goal this year was to collect 100,000 pounds of food – enough to provide food and turkeys for nine food pantries. This year's Food Drive collected 102,000 pounds of food, which will provide hundreds of families in need during this holiday season. On Nov. 17, volunteers were split into two teams to deliver hundreds of cases of food and 360 turkeys to the following food pantries: Fellowship Hill Ministries in Springville, Delevan Methodist Church, Catholic Charities Outreach in Franklinville, Saving Grace OutReach in Cattaraugus, Master's Plan in Dayton, United Church of Christ in Ellicottville, Concord Food Pantry, Little Valley Baptist Church and West Valley Food Pantry.

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“The success of this year’s Food Drive speaks volumes to the generosity and kindness of our employees, partners and subcontractors,” said Lettie Chilson, WVDP Facility Manager and Food Drive Lead. “It shows the positive impact that kindness can have on a community.”

More than 59,000 meals were served at the Cattaraugus Community Action Soup Kitchen in October, and they also provided 443 food boxes to 1,245 individuals at its Food Pantry in the same month. Community Action's Nutrition Division distributed 332 Thanksgiving meal

boxes in November to feed 903 county residents. And more than 9,000 Cattaraugus County residents received the HEAP last year, and this number is expected to be similar this season. The WVDP Food Drive helps to improve the quality of life for people and their community.

“I am honored to be a part of an event that makes a difference in our community,” said Bryan Bower, DOE Project Director. “The amount of food collected each year demonstrates the generosity and kindness of our employees.”

The WVDP extended a thank you to the businesses and organizations who contributed to this year’s success. They include International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, Lodge 2401 – monetary contribution for food; Test America and Southern Springs Construction and their employees – donated cases of food from employees; American DND, RJR Engineering, InTomes, MHF Logistics, MJW and Sanders Parkview Supermarket – donations of food, in-kind services, rental trucks for delivery and community support; DV Brown, Buffalo Fuel Corporation, SLR and Container Products Corporation – food and monetary donations and the U.S. Department of Energy and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority – monetary contribution from employees for food.

“The pressure to meet the needs of our community always increases this time of year when resources are spread so thin around the holidays. We could not meet those needs without the extra efforts of our staff and strong community partnerships to fill the gaps,” said Tony Turano, Cattaraugus County Department of Social Services Director. “The WVDP Food Drive cannot happen without the help and kindness of others in the community.”