ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS HELP TRI-STATE RESIDENTS IN NEED

Change 4 Change penny drive raises more than $890 for local food bank

HUNTINGTON, W. Va. — Young children can contribute adult-sized donations for the hungry.

Three local elementary schools — Davis Creek Elementary, Martha Elementary and Village of Barboursville — participated in Change 4 Change, a penny drive to raise money for the Huntington Area Food Bank (HAFB).

“Change 4 Change was a way for our campaign to reach out to the younger generation and allow them to get involved,” said Whitney Parsley, co-director of Helping Hungry Hearts. “Every little bit helps and that is an important lesson for children to learn early in life.”

The students collectively raised more than $890 in November. Helping Hungry Hearts (HHH), a student-run public relations agency in the W. Page Pitt School of Journalism and Mass Communications at Marshall University, raised money for the HAFB and presented the penny drive to the schools as an additional fundraiser to its main event — Outrunning Hunger 5K Run/Walk.

Administrators, faculty and students at three elementary schools were more than willing to help raise money for the HAFB when Parsley approached them about Change 4 Change. Parsley said HHH would keep the schools in mind for further involvement in fundraising opportunities.

“The schools that participated in the penny drive are always involved in the community in one way or another,” Parsley said. “I'm sure they would be willing to get involved in the future.”

Outrunning Hunger will raise money for the HAFB through sponsorships and entry fees. The race has been scheduled for April 10 at 9 a.m. at Pullman Square in downtown Huntington. The racers will follow a course on Fifth Avenue and circle around Marshall University. Then racers will follow Third Avenue back to Pullman Square.

HHH has set a goal of raising $10,000 from the campaign. Also, the agency projects to have more than 250 participants. With the donations already collected from Change 4 Change, HHH already has reached almost 10 percent of its goal.

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Viki Caldwell, principal at Davis Creek Elementary, said her students are aware of the world around them and wanted to help.

“My students are socially conscious of people in need,” Caldwell said. “This Christmas, students collected socks for a local elementary school here in town, and the year before that, they collected hats and gloves for that same school.”

Davis Creek’s giving doesn’t stop there. The students are currently collecting donations for Haiti.

“Our kids are used to doing things like that,” Caldwell said. “You should see our hallways right now.”

For more information about Helping Hungry Hearts or the Outrunning Hunger 5K Run/Walk, please visit www.marshall.edu/helpinghungryhearts or e-mail the agency at helpinghungryhearts@marshall.edu. For further questions, please call co-director Whitney Parsley at 304-389-0390. To learn more about the HAFB, please contact Brooke Ash at 304-523-6029 or brooke@hafb.org.

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The Huntington Area Food Bank (HAFB) is a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1983 and based in Huntington, W.Va. The HAFB is affiliated with Feeding America, the country’s largest hunger-relief organization. The HAFB serves more than 250 agencies in 17 counties in West Virginia, southeastern Ohio and eastern Kentucky. The HAFB’s main mission is to curb the hunger problem by distributing nutritious food products through its member agency network. The HAFB currently helps to feed 91,000 people per month in the Tri-State area.