



Hazen High School creates 200 Thanksgiving baskets for local families

Student-motivated annual drive to raise \$10,000 worth of food to provide families with a complete Thanksgiving dinner

November 17, 2009—Students in Kerri Dowd’s leadership class at Hazen High School have an annual task that stirs the compassion and boosts the spirit of all of the school’s 1,433 students and 125 teachers and staff.

Hazen’s annual Thanksgiving Food Basket Drive provides a full Thanksgiving dinner for about 200 families from Hazen, McKnight Middle School and local elementary schools.

Each third-period class at Hazen asks students to bring in food to create “baskets” worth about \$50-\$60 and the school’s PTSA donates \$200 to the cause. When the baskets are completely full, a \$25 supermarket gift card is added to allow families to purchase a turkey. Every third-period classroom participated in collecting food: mathematics teacher Andrew Callender’s class collected enough to create 17 Thanksgiving baskets.

“We understand that we’re fortunate and have an opportunity to give to others.”

—Jael Yamamoto, Hazen High School’s senior class co-chair of the Thanksgiving Basket project

The drive will raise about \$10,000 worth of food to ensure that families affected by a tough economy can still enjoy a traditional Thanksgiving meal.

Hazen senior Jael Yamamoto co-chairs the leadership team's efforts along with senior Marissa Fitzgerald.

Yamamoto says that Hazen students and staff are caring, compassionate people who are in a position to help others.

"We understand that many of us are fortunate," said Yamamoto, "and that we have an opportunity to give to others."

Families receiving the baskets are identified by teachers, counselors and the school's Family Liaisons.

Students in the leadership class will also host a Christmas food and gift drive for Vision House, a housing program for homeless single women with children, and will host a Spirit of Giving drive to replenish clothing banks shelves in March.

