

Thanksgiving Charity

Since October 31st, I've been badgering and nagging you all for donations to the Turkey Lady. I was as relentless and rude as a bill collector on Monday. But it all paid off. The chapter's donations totaled \$1320.00 and I thank you for your support. Briefly I want to tell you a little about her organization and how much this Thanksgiving charity provided this year.

Robin started this grass roots organization, 20 years ago; because she felt that many people donate to charities at Christmas, but that those with needs are often forgotten at Thanksgiving. We have been fortunate to participate in this for 14 of those years. She wanted to help the community that has been good to her, so she collects contributions from only friends and family to purchase dinners for the holiday. Once the funds are collected, she matches them, from her own pocket. Then she purchases as many dinners for four that the funds will buy. A dinner for four consists of, one turkey (15-20 lb.) one box of stuffing mix, and two cans of vegetables. This food then goes to the Salvation Army for distribution. The Salvation Army was chosen, rather than other food banks, because they only distribute food to those that show they are in need, and then give them a voucher to pick up their food. It's a good system and eliminates fraud.

Robin has matched donated funds two for one since 9-11-01, because they felt the need to do more. So the \$1320.00 that we collected this year bought almost \$4000.00 of food. Between all the monies she collected and her generous donation, we bought 5335 dinners for four and many that may have not had a decent holiday meal were provided for.



Once again, the YMCA let the Salvation Army use the empty lot the on the south side of the SA campus to set up the distribution site in order to be more efficient.. This lot has a paved drive around the perimeter, so people could just drive in, present their ticket, and pick up the food without ever getting out of the car. In the past, the handicapped and

elderly had a difficult time getting their groceries back to the car, so this made distribution quick and safe. The food tickets that were given out, had a day and time for the person to pick up their food. This kept traffic congestion down so we were not backing up onto Highland Avenue. An army of volunteers bagged groceries, collected vouchers and handed out food. We had volunteers from Salvation Army, Publix, High school cheer squads, Civil Air Patrol and other organizations that I didn't know. The whole scene was an impressive sight.

Who would have thought that such a little gesture of thanks would grow into the mega event it has become. In twenty years this has grown from 11 turkeys to 5335 complete dinners. We were up from last year by over 400 dinners. It took two 53 foot refrigerated trailers, just to deliver the turkeys. Next year I hope we can help Robin set another record. She'd like to hit the 6000 mark in 2014.

Robin wanted me to pass on her thanks and her appreciation for our help. I responded with our thanks for her allowing us to be a part of this charity. Likewise, I personally want to thank all of you that donated for helping a worthy cause and making others holidays more enjoyable. We can be proud that we made a big impact in helping to feed over 20,000 people this Thanksgiving. Happy holidays!

Bugman