

The Community Page



Scouting for Food



“On my honor I will do my best, to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.”

This Scout Oath is not just a formality for a Court of Honor. Rather, it is a code to live by and can be seen in action in the Idaho Falls area when local scouts spread out in their neighborhoods to “help other people at all times.”

The oath is as real as is the war on hunger, with battles raging all across the country in behalf of families in need. Scouts of the Grand Teton Council won a formidable victory this year when they collected 449,741 cans of food for donations to area food banks. Again this year, scouts knocked on doors and rang doorbells to personally solicit donations, and Idaho Falls residents responded—this year’s donations increased by nearly 25,000 food items over 2008. As a result of this act of service, many thousands of meals will be provided for our neighbors who otherwise would go hungry.

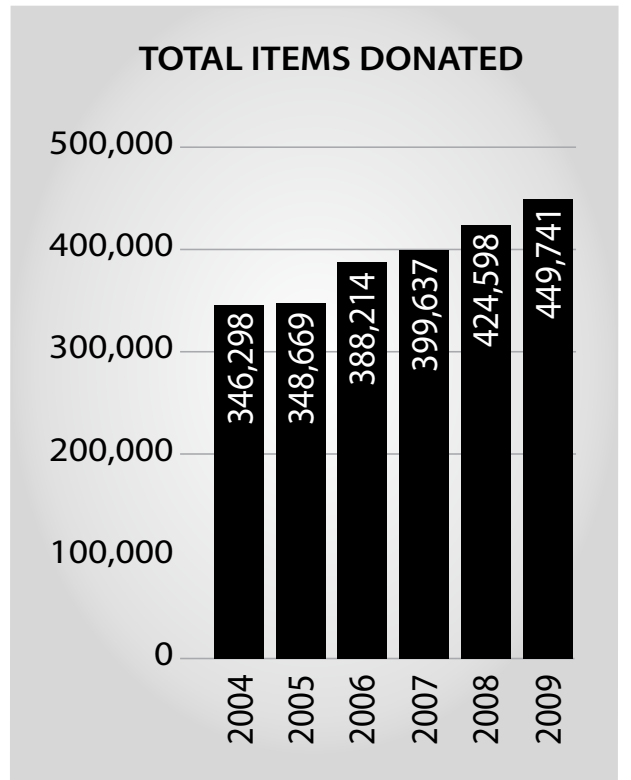
Even though this success is cause for celebration, the benefits of this food drive go far beyond feeding hungry people, and become a win-win

situation for everyone involved, most especially the scouts themselves.

Leaders and parents of young men freely admit that boys are growing up in a world few of us would have imagined a decade ago and feel great concern that they have the opportunity to develop those character traits that lead to happiness and fulfillment in adulthood. Unfortunately, traditional family values are increasingly being eroded in a world of self-involvement and hedonism. The question is how to compete in such an environment, how to keep boys’ interest, and how to foster a sense of belonging instead of gang mentality.

Many of the answers lie in just such a program as Scouting in general, and the Scout Food Drive in particular. As one wise man once

observed, it is impossible for parents and youth leaders to compete with the world of entertainment, for example, in the amount of money and expertise spent to attract our youth and their dollars. But the good news is that we don’t have to in order to lead them to fulfillment. There is a tool available to us that all the enticement to the contrary cannot duplicate, and that is the joy found in service.



Battling Hunger



Buck Horton,
director of the
Idaho Falls
Community Food
Bank

Where does all of that food go? Actually, it manages to find its way to a number of destinations, including the Idaho Falls Community Food Bank, which is stocked entirely by donations from the Idaho Falls community. And the food bank really appreciates the help. “When I took over the food bank 11 or 12 years ago, it was a big month if we had 200 families,” Food Bank Chairman Buck Horton says. “Right now, we’re feeding between 600 and 700 families every month, and we’re handing out about 40,000 to 45,000 cans of food each month.”

Although donations from Scouting for Food will help significantly, Buck estimates it won’t be long before the food bank has completely used up that supply. Fortunately for the

Food Bank, there are other sources of support as well.

“We’re so blessed here in Idaho Falls to have such a benevolent community,” Buck says. “Last year, we also had monetary donations of about \$130,000, and we used \$115,000 of it to purchase food worth more than \$600,000 at market value.”

Food from the Scout Food Drive is also shared with the Idaho Falls Soup Kitchen, which has been serving a free lunch to the hungry for 23 years. An area as beautiful and blessed as ours surely has the heart to follow their lead and give from our bounty to those in need.

You can still donate to the Scouting for Food Drive!
Contact the Grand Teton Council at 574 4th Street (522-5155) or the Idaho Falls Community Food Bank, located at 245 N. Placer, at (208) 390-1952.

