

300 turkeys and \$500 donated to Community Pantry

Written by By Chrissy Largo Sun Correspondent
Friday, 27 November 2015 07:16



When the Western New Mexico Motorcycle Riders Organization is not out lobbying state representatives and senators, fighting for biker rights in Sante Fe, or educating local high school students about their Motorcycle Awareness Program, you can find them donating their time and money to non-profit organizations such as the local Jim Harlin Community Pantry, also known as “The Community Pantry.”

The Community Pantry was established by Jim Harlin and Tom Crider in 1999. They felt there was a strong need for more healthy food alternatives and nutritional education in the area of Gallup and surrounding towns.

In prior years, in coordination with the Community Pantry, the WNMMRO has organized various motorcycle fun runs and all proceeds were donated to the Community Pantry; however, this year, they ran out of time.

So, they decided they would present a \$500 check on Nov.21, during the “T’s for Turkey’s” event held at Gallup’s Lowes Shop-n-Save shopping center.

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The \$500 will go toward general purchases of food to give out to local families for the holidays.

“There are a lot of good people that are involved. Just like any other volunteer organization, you have your core group of people, you depend on them to make things happen,” said Jim Smith, coordinator of WNMMRO.

The WNMMRO is an organization that consists of about 40 members that meet once a month advocating for the rights, safety, awareness and education of motorcycle riders.

Eight of the members were able to make it to the event to present the \$500 check to Alice Perez, the executive director of the Community Pantry.

Also, in attendance at the event, for their seventh year, was iHeart Radio, who had a live-broadcast of three of their radio stations 99.1 KGLX, 99.9 KXTC, and 106.1 KSMQ during the event.

They were on the air for a total of four hours, advertising to the community to stop by and donate.

“We do this to benefit the Community Pantry and what we do is try to help fill their freezers with turkeys and non-perishable foods,” iHeart Media Account Executive/Promotions Director Jennifer Saucedo said. “The community pantry, in return, gives it to the needy families, elderly, as well, as veterans within the community.”

The theme “T’s for Turkey’s” event brought in 300 donated turkeys this year that will be distributed to local veterans who are already listed in the Community Pantry database.

T-shirts were also given to people that donated turkeys to the Community Pantry.

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This is how it went: If you bought a turkey for yourself, you had to purchase one for the Community Pantry.

The turkey donated to the pantry had to be of equal weight to the turkey that you purchased for yourself. This year, the cost of the turkeys during the event was 57 cents per pound and that was for four hours. After the four hours were up, the price of the turkeys increased to their advertised price of 67 cents per pound.

“The event is a pretty pricey event, I mean, as far as a radio station to put on,” Saucedo said. “We do have to get local sponsors to help us out with that as well.”

Last year, Saucedo and her volunteer team helped the pantry with almost 400 turkeys. This year they had volunteers from the Gallup Lions Club helping out along with their minimal staff, all who took time off to do this event for the organization.

“We had a huge amount of community there,” Perez said, “It being a grocery store, some people were there just to shop and some people were there specifically for the turkeys. We had Pinnacle Bank show up, and they, as an organization, purchased a bunch of turkeys for us.”

Barbara Esquibel, WNMMRO treasurer, said that the community pantry is one of the programs in Gallup that they do support; however, it is not the only one.

They are the local community organizer for the “Toys for Tots,” a toy drive that helps children in need during the holiday seasons. Each year, drop off locations are set up locally so that donators can drop off an unwrapped toy.

The organization is also part of the Patriotic Guard Riders and Veterans Helping Veterans. Usually they support other clubs or riders organizations, by not only being there to participate, but by putting information up about upcoming motorcycle rides.

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“We do a lot. We have carried the remains of two soldiers this year,” Esquibel said. “We call it a pony express. WNMMRO has their hands in a little bit of everything around Gallup.”

On Dec. 6, the organization has an upcoming bike ride scheduled at the Red Rock Balloon Rally, and they have their meetings set up every third Saturday of the month.

Visit: wnmmro.webs.com . The Community Pantry: thecommunitypantry.org or (505)726-8068.