

Rotary Club Challenge and Match: Adopt an All Faiths Food Bank School Pantry

Feed a Student, Fuel the Brain initiative helps nourish local children and families.

SARASOTA, FL – The Rotary Club of Sarasota Foundation (RCSF) has committed \$60,000 to All Faiths Food Bank’s School Pantry Program to feed hungry students and their families. Recently, at the Food Bank’s School Pantry at Emma E. Booker Elementary, Rotary Foundation President Jim Henry announced a challenge to local businesses, clubs, associations and the community at-large to adopt a school, and provide the funds and the volunteers to operate the pantry. Up to \$20,000 for the creation of new school-based pantries will be matched.

All Faith’s School Pantry Program allows parents of students to select food items from a pantry set up on the school grounds and staffed by volunteers. Each pantry is stocked by All Faiths Food Bank and provides enough food for participants to feed the members of their family for several days. With more than 21,000 (50%) Sarasota County students receiving free or reduced meals at school, meaning that their family lives at or below the poverty line, the need for School Pantries is abundant and growing. Student hunger leads to chronic absenteeism; which hinders grade level reading, inhibits future employability and contributes to a repeating cycle of poverty for many families.

The members of the Rotary Club of Sarasota have been actively volunteering with All Faiths Food Bank for the last few years and have worked directly with the parents and students in need. “No child in this community should go a day without food because their parents lack the means to put food on the table. Through this partnership, the Rotary Club of Sarasota Foundation and All Faiths Food Bank can see to it that families in need continue to get the food that they need,” said RCSF president Jim Henry. “We are providing funds to open new pantries at additional schools to help more students and families. What we need now is people-power and a commitment to step up for our children.”

Anyone in the community can contribute financially by going to the RCSF web site www.rotaryclubofsarasotafoundation.org, or sending a check to The Rotary Club of Sarasota Foundation, P.O. Box 2766 Sarasota, FL 34230-2766. Designate: for School Based Food Pantries.

Donations may be made to All Faiths Food Bank as well, www.allfaithsfoodbank.org, by mail, 8171 Blaikie Ct. Sarasota, FL 34240, or by phone: 941-379-6333.

Courtesy Photo: L-R, Emma E. Booker Asst. Principal Holly Heim, Rotary Club of Sarasota Foundation President Jim Henry, Foundation board member Joan Verizzo, Rotary club member Dick Rehmyer, and Rotary Club of Sarasota president Vicente Medina.

About the Rotary Club of Sarasota Foundation and Rotary Club of Sarasota

The Rotary Club of Sarasota Foundation is a registered 501(c)(3) and the charitable arm of the Rotary Club of Sarasota. Its mission is to help the Rotary Club of Sarasota build a better community and world through humanitarian, educational and charitable endeavors. The Rotary Club of Sarasota is comprised of nearly 100 active local business, professional and community leaders dedicated to the ideal of service and is part of Rotary International: an organization with 1.2 million members in more than 200 countries. For more information visit RotaryClubofSarasota.com or call Rick Hughes at 941-374-5896.

About All Faiths Food Bank

All Faiths Food Bank, awarded a consecutive 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, is a member of Feeding America and the hub of the hunger-relief system in DeSoto and Sarasota counties. Last year, All Faiths Food Bank distributed 7.1 million pounds of food equating to 5.9 million meals through 180 pantries, soup kitchens, churches, community centers, schools, and programs. For more information, to find food, or to volunteer, call [941-379-6333](tel:941-379-6333) or visit www.allfaithsfoodbank.org.