

# Schools

## Center Academy helps fill Salvation Army food pantry

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Correspondent

ORANGE PARK – For two weeks, the 66 students at Center Academy on Kingsley Avenue in Orange Park have been collecting food to help replenish the Salvation Army's food pantry. Introduced as a contest, competing teams were grades 6-8, grades 9-10, and grades 11-12. All totaled, over 1,750 food items were brought in.

Classes understood the need presented. Normally, the county-wide School Fall Food Drive keeps the Salvation Army's food pantry supplied for awhile. However, with the current economic downturn, especially for families employed in the building industry, their pantry has reached emergency lows.

An incentive was offered to get the students fired up. The winning class would have an entire week of dress down; leaving their school uniforms at home and wearing their usual clothes.

Parents and grandparents brought in cases of food. The students dug deep into their own pockets and emptied their wallets to help buy more food.

"It's for a good cause," 11th grader Cody Wilder said. "It shows people that there is someone out there that cares about them. We're not going to sit around and let them starve."

The faculty appreciated the unity they saw among the students. "This food drive brought our class together," said Carol Kuhnaw, the teacher for the 9th and 10th grade classroom. "It was a total group effort. Some gave up their lunch money for this. They've been really excited."



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Members of the winning class are (l to r) Teacher Ed Bennedit and Juniors and seniors, Travis Shelton, Calleb Perry, Kyle Daymon, Cody Wilder, Leann Sabatini, Trey McDower, Bridget Winn, Nicholas Hernandez.

With the final tally being over 500 food items per classroom, everyone was a winner. The 11th and 12th grade students won a full week of dress down. Everyone else won four dress down days.

"We are just really so grateful," Major Cheryl Phillips of the Salvation Army of Clay County said, noting how many families would be helped through the students' efforts. "This is just wonderful!"