

Who Needs Us Most?

One of my favorite things about being a K-Kid is that we reach out into our community to help people and organizations that need us. I love the feeling I get when I know we have made a difference to someone. The hard part isn't finding people who need help, but figuring out who needs us the most, and how we, intermediate school kids, can do something big enough to change things in our community. We knew that food was an issue for some in our community. We also were aware of homelessness in the surrounding area. Veterans and elderly people being lonely is also something that our club was concerned about. Finding out about specific needs and figuring out how we could address these needs took teamwork and cooperation.

We asked our advisor and our local Kiwanis Club if there were people in our community that were hungry. We contacted local food pantries and soup kitchens (like the one at Holy Cross Church and the soup kitchen in Middletown, NY) to see if food was an issue our community was struggling with. We found out that it is. The soup kitchen feeds a lot of people and the food pantry could use more food. We used this information to continue a project that our K-Kids club has done for many years. It is called "Soup on Saturdays". It is a canned and dry food drive that we have in our school. We ask the students to bring in food and reward them with stickers. Our club makes posters to advertise this food drive and we remind our friends and classmates about bringing food in, and how important it is. We learned how to work together while doing this project. Looking at all the food we collected, we really felt like we made a difference in our community.

Some of us have grandparents in nursing homes. We knew that not all the people in nursing homes have visitors. We asked our advisor and local Kiwanis Club if this was an issue we could help with. They helped us contact a nursing home that had people that didn't get visitors. Our club is making holiday cards and bringing them and some special treats to the nursing home. The best part is, we will be bringing them ourselves and visiting with the people there. We are going close to the Holiday season and hope we can bring some holiday spirit with us and make some people smile. We learned that you don't need to collect something or donate money to fix every problem. Some people just need some company and a smile!

My grandmother volunteers for the warming station in Middletown. It is a place where homeless people can go to get a warm meal and sleep somewhere warm. I wanted to help also so my grandmother gave me the phone number of the organization that runs the warming station. I called them and they said that the people who sleep there could use warm socks. Socks are something everyone needs and are not expensive. Later this year, I would like to have a sock drive in my school. With the help of the rest of my K-Kids club, I want to see if everyone in my school would donate 1 pair if sock. If I can accomplish this goal I would be able to give the warming station over 500 pairs of socks. This would make the people who have no homes at least have warm feet. I learned that I could find a need and come up with a plan to help fix it.

These examples are just a few of the projects that our club has planned or has done this school year. We will continue to research the needs around us to find out who needs us the most. We will use the adults in our lives and the internet to find information about who needs us and how we can help them. We hope to help and learn as we make a difference in our community.