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Included below is a press release regarding the efforts of Ferris State University faculty, staff and students in partnering with the local community to help area residents in need. Further information is available by contacting Leah Nixon, assistant director of News Services.

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Ferris Gives to Those In Need Through Food Drives

BIG RAPIDS – The upcoming holidays remind us that it's not what you receive, but rather what you give to those in need that makes the season bright. Students, faculty and staff at Ferris State University are preparing for this year's holiday season by finding ways to give back on campus and in the community.

One such campaign includes the Ferris Student Government Holiday Food Drive, which runs through Dec. 3. In its third year, organizers hope to raise 7,500 pounds of non-perishable food items to donate to area food pantries. The campus community raised 6,100 pounds of food for donation during the 2008 campaign.

"We want this year's holiday food drive to be even bigger and better," said Liz Cottrell, Student Government food drive committee chair and Delta Zeta representative.

Donations can be made Monday through Thursday from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. in the Student Government Office, Rankin Student Center Room 121. The last day of the drive donations may be made between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

This year, the campaign also includes participation by Ferris faculty and staff, who are collecting food through their offices around campus. According to Cottrell, a prize will be given to the faculty or staff office that gives the most canned-goods. Student organizations, residence halls and Greek organizations also have the chance to win a monetary prize for donating the most food.

"This is a great way for people on the Ferris campus to give back to the community and help people less fortunate than them. Even a small amount of donated food is a big help to other people," Cottrell added.

Other efforts throughout the fall semester include Ferris' combined efforts with the Zonta Club of Big Rapids in the "Stand Against Poverty" initiative, the largest worldwide rally against world poverty, which was held on Oct. 16 at the Big Rapids City Library. Ferris students, staff and faculty, along with local community members, brought nonperishable food items to be donated to Project Starburst.

Brought to her attention by a student, Erin Weber, an assistant professor of English at Ferris, proposed the idea of joining the rally to students in her Advanced Technical Writing class. They met during regular class time and walked the few blocks over to the library to donate food items and be counted as part of the “Stand Against Poverty.”

“This was a great way to strengthen the tie between the student population and the Big Rapids community; a good way to see that students do care. It was easy to do and didn’t take the whole afternoon, so I thought ‘why not?’ It was fun to get out,” Weber said. “More students should let Ferris faculty and staff know about local volunteer events like these.”

Renee Mika, Ferris College of Optometry associate professor and Zonta board member, said “This was a great example of campus community engagement. Zonta would like to especially thank the Ferris community for helping with this great cause.”

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