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Hundreds of households accept tens of thousands of pounds of food from Farm Share again



Standing near the scene of first distribution, along a line of volunteers, are (from left) College of Central Florida's Jack Wilkinson Levy Campus Manager of Instructional Services Leah Gamble, Tri-County Community Resource Center, Farm Share Distribution Manager Leighsha Johnson, and A.D. Goodman, who wore three hats on Saturday – Beverly's husband, Central Florida Electric Cooperative Customer Service Manager and Chiefland Fire Rescue Assistant Chief. This set of people went back to work serving others within minutes after being dragged into the street for a photo opportunity.

Story and Photos

By Jeff M. Hardison © June 9, 2018 at 4:58 p.m.

CHIEFLAND -- The Tri-County Community Resource Center again brought together an army of volunteers Saturday (June 9) in another of its multitude of methods for helping people as the second Farm Share event was held there.



A big line of volunteers provide plenty of bags of food for quick distribution to people in vehicles.

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'Be Gentle With Me - I'm not as tough as I look! Pasture-raised eggs - keep refrigerator at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.'



Chiefland Police Officer and K-9 Officer Pete Barnes helps direct traffic. Barnes, other CPD members, and volunteers with the Levy County Sheriff's Office's Citizens On Patrol prevented traffic snarls and protected life and property during the big event in downtown Chiefland on Saturday.

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Having food and feeling some level of security are among the significant problems some families face in the Tri-County Area of Levy, Dixie and Gilchrist counties, TCCRC Executive Director Beverly Goodman said. The Farm Share event on Saturday helps address one piece of the puzzle facing these communities, she added.

Leighsha "Superwoman" Johnson, distribution manager of Farm Share, is the leader from the Farm Share group that caused 20,000 to 30,000 pounds of food to be delivered to Chiefland via giant trucks and palette-moving machines on Saturday. Johnson was tagged with the "Superwoman" nickname by TCCRC Executive Director Goodman, because the Farm Share program's success in Chiefland results in large part from her work.

TCCRC, Farm Share and other partners, like the City of Chiefland, distributed it to more than 350 households thanks to 50 volunteers who were organized by Goodman, and the TCCRC.

The Tri-County Community Resource Center is the Partnership for Strong Families' fourth resource center established outside of Alachua County. TCCRC provides a vast array of free services and resources that residents and visitors from these three counties indicated are needed.

As for Farm Share, its mission is to alleviate hunger and malnutrition by recovering and distributing fresh and nutritious food to those who need it most.

Even the weather cooperated Saturday, with what has been a relatively wet late May and June not having rain in Chiefland during the event.

People in vehicles waited in a relatively fast-moving line as volunteers put bags of food into open trunks, open hatchbacks, open truck beds and through the open side doors of vans.

Among the types of food distributed Saturday were corn, rice, beans, potatoes, eggs, soy milk, frozen blueberries, frozen chicken breasts, emergency ration meals, beef stew pouches and canned chicken meat.

Among the long list of individual volunteers included people who served others simply as giving human beings and other volunteers who are connected with service-oriented groups such as the TCCRC, the College of Central Florida's Jack Wilkinson Levy Campus, Chiefland Police Department, Chiefland Fire Rescue, Central Florida Electric Cooperative, Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office, Gilchrist Prevention Coalition, Levy County Prevention Coalition, Meridian Behavioral Healthcare, Levy County Sheriff's Office Citizens On Patrol, the Florida Department of Health's Dixie-Gilchrist-Levy Counties Unit and North Florida Pediatrics.

The process worked well, like a fine-tuned machine where people quickly received their food and then drove away. And while the procedure might have seemed mechanical, the spirit of humans sharing love for one another by helping each other was bountiful.

The attitude of caring for others did not require a script of coaching, as was shown by one young boy bringing bottles of chilled water to workers along the serving line and even to observers standing in the hot morning sun. Examples of the many volunteers aiding each other as well as giving food to recipients were plentiful and carried throughout the whole event.

Some people served in a few capacities as volunteers, because there is only some percentage of the population who give without measure. For instance, Sheryl Brown is a

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captain with the Gilchrist County Sheriff's Office, but she is also a member of the board of directors of the TCCRC and she is a leader with the Gilchrist Prevention Coalition. Robert Wells of Meridian Behavioral Healthcare is also a founder of the Levy County Prevention Coalition. Angie Land who was volunteering with Kyle Roberts as part of the Florida Department of Health's Dixie-Gilchrist-Levy Counties' Unit, is also the director of the Family Life Ministries of the Lafayette Baptist Association, where she teaches bible studies, leads marriage and family conferences and offers biblical counseling to individuals, couples and families.

Every one of the 50 volunteers working Saturday to feed hundreds of families all are among the people who help others.

And while some volunteers might momentarily wonder about what their bodies are telling them in regard to whether some level of aches or sunburn are worth it, that moment will flicker and be snuffed into silence by the knowledge that they helped so many hundreds of households, at least through meeting the needs for some number of meals.