

The DALLAS POST

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Feeling the pangs of hunger

REBECCA BRIA
rbria@timesleader.com

Although she hadn't eaten dinner, Lindsay Buss gave up her entire plate of chicken and pasta to those with only rice and bread.

The Misericordia University student felt compelled to share with her "low income" peers on Monday, Nov. 17, during the Fifth Annual Hunger Banquet in the Kennedy Room of the Banks Student Center at the university. The banquet is held by Misericordia's Social Justice Committee and led by Christine Somers, director of campus ministry.

Participants in the banquet were divided into the three income groups and served food that a person in their bracket likely eats. The theme of the program this year was the effects of climate change on food in the world.

"I felt bad," said Buss, who was placed in the high-income group. "They deserve it just as much as I do."

Jen Lozier, who was in the low-income group, accepted some noodles from Buss.

"I feel bad because most of us Americans live in the upper class," Lozier said. "It's nice that they're all coming around and offering us food."

Fifty-four people, mainly students, signed up to participate in the banquet. On the way in, each person was handed a yellow, orange or blue ticket with a scenario and was directed to the income group represented by the color of his or her ticket.

Fifteen percent of the participants were placed among the high-income group, 35 percent in the middle-income group and 50 percent in the low-income group as representative of the percentages of people in the income groups worldwide.

Those in the high-income group were seated at an elegant table and served iced tea, salad, chicken, pasta and cheese cake. Reverend Don Williams, chaplain and associate director of campus ministry at Misericordia University, acted as their waiter.

The middle-income group sat at tables with no tablecloths and had hot dogs, chips and iced tea. At one point, Williams took a jug of iced tea from the table, saying the others in the high-income group were running low.

"Oh my God," responded Kelly Ann Byrne, who was shocked Williams gave their beverage to the "wealthy."

Everyone in the low-income group was forced to sit on the floor. They were given a small amount of white rice, a piece of pita bread and water.

Not all of the students in the upper-income categories shared out of guilt. One said he gave up his salad because he doesn't like salad while another said she ate before the banquet.

After eating, participants were asked how they felt. Common feelings experienced were jealousy, hunger, thankfulness, unfortunate, guilt and sadness. Sister Jean Messaros has at-

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Tom Evans prepares Thanksgiving food bags at the Back Mountain Food Pantry in the Trucksville United Methodist Church hall basement.

CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Giving to those in need

Number of Thanksgiving baskets to be given out climbs to 217 this year, up from 145 last year.

REBECCA BRIA
rbria@timesleader.com

Volunteers at the Back Mountain Food Pantry are putting together at least 72 more Thanksgiving baskets than they did last November.

Mark Stull, coordinator, says the pantry plans to distribute 217 Thanksgiving baskets this year, up from 145 baskets in 2007.

Needy residents of the Back Mountain will come to the pantry at their scheduled appointment time between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 25.

Louise Hazeltine, who served as the pantry's coordinator from 2004 to July of this year, says the pantry has never filled so many Thanksgiving baskets. She remembers the pantry giving out just 75 baskets in 2003.

Both Stull and Hazeltine feel the increased need is a result of the current economy.

"Everything requires more money and for some people, necessities such as food get squeezed out," Stull said. "It really comes down to a matter of the economy. We feel it from the other end as well. We see less and we have to work much harder to get the same amount of donations because people don't have as much to give. We have to ask more often, longer and harder to get the same amount of food as we have in the past and we need more."

The Back Mountain Food Pantry was founded in 1977 and operated out of the basement of the Kingston Township Municipal Building until June 2003 when Trucksville United Methodist Church offered space in the basement of its administration building. The Back Mountain Food Pantry serves residents of the Dallas and Lake-Leh-

man School Districts. It is operated by the Back Mountain Ministerium, which is comprised of 26 interdenominational churches.

Individuals and families qualify for Thanksgiving baskets and food assistance according to the federal income guidelines. A family of three to five people eligible for a basket from the pantry will receive the following: a frozen turkey, two boxes of mashed potatoes, two boxes of stuffing, two cans of corn, two cans of green beans, one can of carrots, one can of fruit cocktail, one can of cranberry sauce, one dozen rolls and one pound of butter.

Smaller families and individuals, especially the elderly, are given a turkey breast instead of a whole turkey since a breast is smaller and easier to cook. This year, the pantry will distribute 107 turkeys and 122 turkey breasts. The total amount of turkey is higher than the total baskets because larger families receive more than one turkey.

The Thanksgiving food was donated by individuals and from food drives held in November at Little Nursery Day Care Center, Dallas Senior High School, Dallas Middle School, Dallas Rotary Club, Misericordia University and many churches.

Forty-five volunteers will fill the baskets at the pantry. Turkeys, rolls, butter and gravy mixes will be picked up at 8 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 24, and stored at the pantry for one day. Turkey breasts will be procured early on Tuesday, Nov. 25. Packing of turkeys, butter and other perishable items will also take place at that time.

Stull points out that "need knows no zip code" and says

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Dick Montgomery, left, and Tom Oliver stack prepared bags of Thanksgiving food at the Back Mountain Food Pantry Trucksville.

WHERE TO DONATE

- 3 p.m. today at an ecumenical service at St. Therese's Church, Shavertown.
- Back Mountain Food Pantry, basement of the administration building at Trucksville United Methodist Church. Donations are accepted at the pantry 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at the pantry or 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday at the church.
- Cook's Pharmacy, Shavertown
- St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Dallas
- Monetary donations to: Back Mountain Food Pantry, 40 Knob Hill Rd., Trucksville, PA 18708.

Council plays an important role

REBECCA BRIA
rbria@timesleader.com

Newcomers to Dallas Elementary School don't have to worry about the first day of school and making friends as much as they might if they attended any other school.

That's because the school's Character Council holds a pizza party for new students every summer to introduce them to Dallas Elementary before the start of school. The council also mentors the new children throughout the year.

The Character Council at Dallas Elementary School is comprised of 56 fourth and fifth-grade students who are selected by their teachers.



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Every June, each third-grade teacher chooses three boys and three girls from his or her class who exhibit high moral character to participate in the council the following year. Selected students remain in the council throughout the fourth and fifth grades, but fourth-grade teachers can al-

so nominate a student if there is an opening.

Betsy Jerome, in her ninth year as guidance counselor at Dallas Elementary, serves as adviser to the Character Council.

"It was formulated about

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LITTLE MISS PILGRIM



CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK/ FOR THE DALLAS POST

Madelyn Gardner is all ready for her class performance during the annual Thanksgiving program at the Gatehouse Pre-School. For more photos of the program, please turn to page 5.



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