

# THE NEWS Guard

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## Nonprofits see rise in need, giving

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Tough economic times hit some people harder than others, and the pain can be felt not just in their pocketbooks but also in their stomachs. Charitable nonprofits can be a measure of just how deep that pain is.

Many Lincoln City nonprofits say they have seen higher than normal need this year, primarily from new clients who had previously not used their services.

The good news is that donations continue to come in and nonprofits are finding ways to meet the needs of their expanded clientele.

"I'm having partners call with record-breaking numbers of food boxes going out," said Lincoln County Food Share director Nancy Smith.

The central warehouse for the Food Share program in Newport supplies pantries across the county. If the food pantries in Lincoln City or other locations run out, they call Smith for additional supplies.

Siletz, which usually serves 40 families per month, ran out recently when 48 families requested food. Smith arranged for two additional boxes to be sent out.

"We're getting more calls from our agencies saying we need more food," Smith said.

Still, there is food on the shelves at the warehouse in Newport. In addition to cash donations, people donate cans of food from their shelves as well as volunteering their time.

The Lincoln City Community Center has been offering free admission for the month of November to anyone who brings in three cans of food for the Lincoln City Food Pantry. Community Center Director Gail Kimberling said as of Friday, Nov. 21, about 500 cans of food had been donated.

Donna Sanders, who runs the Depoe Bay Food Pantry, said despite record numbers of families needing help, the pantry was doing fine. They serve about 100 to 130 families each month and have registered about 30 new families over the past several months, most of whom have never been to the pantry before.

The Depoe Bay pantry tries to provide an entire turkey dinner for at least 50 families at Thanksgiving time. This year Sanders went ahead and ordered 50 turkeys without knowing how she was going to pay for them. Each turkey costs about \$10 wholesale and she was expecting to have to pay \$500 for them.

"That very same night a guy came in with a check for \$1,000," she said.

The check paid for all the turkeys and all the fixings for 50 dinners.

The Backpack Food Program has seen a dramatic increase in need since the beginning of the year. The program provides backpacks full of food to schoolchildren who otherwise would not eat on weekends. The program has expanded steadily since it began in spring of 2007, but has seen a large increase in the past few months. At the end of September, the program was serving 95 kids. There are now 135 kids getting the weekly backpacks at school.

"We're doing pretty good," said program organizer Pat Robertson.

Several local grocery stores have allowed volunteers to hand out to approaching customers lists of items needed for the backpacks. Those who want to can then add a few items to their grocery carts and donate them immediately after shopping.

Food prices have gone up, Robertson said, so the weekly cost per backpack has risen from \$14 to about \$16.

Getting kids what they need is high on many priority lists. Realtors for Kids holds a fundraiser every year to provide clothing for schoolchildren. According to organizer Mary O'Connor, they raised \$4,400 this year, not an abnormally low amount. The organization typically receives between \$3,500 and \$7,000 annually, mostly from Realtors.

The funds are given directly to the school district. School counselors get clothes for children who need them. Although O'Connor thought the primary need might be for a new winter coat or items that were just too much for some family budgets, she was told the highest demand was for basics such as underwear and socks.

With housing markets at the center of the economic downturn across the country, O'Connor was happy that so many Realtors still managed to contribute.

"We've got Realtors that are quitting everywhere," she said. "People are still so generous in this community."

Lincoln City's Angels Anonymous has seen such an increase in need this year that they ran out of money earlier this month. It's the first time in their 10 years of existence that has happened, according to treasurer Roger Sprague. In 2007, the nonprofit gave out \$51,000. This year \$52,000 was given out in the first 10 months. They only help families who haven't received assistance from them before.

The organization has an endowment that provides between \$8,000 and \$9,000 a year. And some families donate every year, one family giving as much as \$1,000. Since the beginning of November, when funds ran out, about \$6,000 in donations have come in.

"We've had two families send us a check for \$500," Sprague said.

But the primary source of funds is the Angels Ball in December. So far, the sign-up for tables is a little low, but they always get a rush for tickets during the last week. Sprague was hopeful that attendance would turn out to be high since the need is so great this year.