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Giving their all for their community

by Amy Schrader Correspondent

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When it comes to holiday meals, three Brentwood middle schools recently battled for community glory with a food fight, but according to organizers, it wasn't a messy competition.

Brentwood students from Adams, Bristow and Edna Hill Middle schools competed to collect the most nonperishable food items for the Brentwood Regional Community Chest (BRCC). The school that collected the most received bragging rights, as well as a holiday trophy in the form of a small, fake Christmas tree named the 'Giving Tree.'

Each school's student leadership team organized food drives.

“The kids enjoyed the challenge,” said Bristow Middle School teacher Shawna Borba. “We had in-depth conversations about the faces and stages of poverty and how everyone needs to help at some point.”

All items were donated to the BRCC this year, as donations to the organization were low.

The Brentwood Regional Community Chest has been helping needy families in Brentwood, Byron, Knightsen, Discovery Bay and Bethel Island, for more than 45 years.

According to the organization’s Co-President Kevin King, this year, 550 local families will be receiving a holiday dinner, a box of nonperishable food and gifts for all children under 18 who live in the household.

The program depends on the generosity of the community.

According to Lill Pierce, BRCC founder Rose Pierce’s daughter, local schools have supported the organization for more than twenty years. This year, when donations were low, organizers and school officials started the food fight competition hoping to increase donations.

“It’s great that so many kids worked together to support local families and it shows them what they can do to make an impact on the community,” said Brentwood Regional Community Chest Co-President and Brentwood Union School District (BUSD) Superintendent Dana Eaton.

The totals for the school competition were announced Friday, Dec. 12, at the BRCC’s packing night at Brentwood Elementary School, which was filled with students from local schools, families, community leaders and teachers all working together to sort and pack thousands of food items into boxes.

"This is Brentwood's version of what the Christmas spirit is all about," said King.

The school's contributions were astounding. More than 10,000 items were collected. Adams Middle School collected 3,544; Edna Hill Middle School collected 2,274; and the winner, Bristow Middle School, collected 4,701 items.

Eaton and Brentwood Mayor Bob Taylor presented Bristow Middle School's ASB President Brayden Spears with the 'Giving Tree' trophy.

"It's pretty incredible we pulled this off," said Spears. "It feels good to know we are helping people out in a time of great need."