**Lunches with Love: What It Is and How to Participate**

Service Unit 172 is putting our best efforts forward to pack 1000 lunches or move for Sharing and Caring hands and the Mary’s Place Transitional Housing Shelter. (And yes, we will be offering a patch at cost for troops to purchase)

***Ways for Girl Scouts to Participate***

1. We need to collect the food! We are collecting food items at all of our Service Unit events. However we can use your help in collecting food as well.
2. We need to decorate the lunch bags. Please have scouts buy and decorate plain brown or white lunch bags.
3. All scouts and their families are welcome to join us in June to help make the sandwiches and pack the lunches.
4. Finally drivers and loaders are needed to bring the lunches to Mary’s Place and Sharing & Caring Hands.

All help is greatly appreciated! Please email Danielle Kouzoukas at dmladay@yahoo.com with any questions that you may have.

***Why is this important to our scouts?***

The reason the scouts do this is to help those in our communities who are less fortunate. It doesn't matter if you are from Plymouth, Minneapolis, San Diego, Houston, Nashville, or Washington D.C. There are people who are struggling to feed themselves and their families’ every day! It is important that we stress this kindness to our youth today. To help others. To give a helping hand.

***What can they donate??***

Great question! Our first priority is to collect the key items for our lunch packing event. However, as long as the item remains unopened, you are welcome to donate most anything as long as it is a long lasting item (non perishable).

Our most needed items are:

* Peanut Butter
* Jelly
* Individual Servings of Applesauce
* Individual Servings of Pudding
* Individual Bags of Chips, Pretzels or Popcorn
* Individual bottles of water
* Juice boxes
* Sandwich bags and Lunch Bags

Anything helps! Remember, they go through it at the center, so if you have questions, go ahead and donate it and trust that they center where the food is donated (in our case, Sharing & Caring Hands and Mary’s Place)

**Full Details on Hosting a Food Drive:**

***1. Decide on your Food Drive Dates :***

Supplies Needed:

* Get 5 bags per scout (or however many you want to distribute)
* Print out as many copies of the Lunches With Love Flyer as you need to leave one with each bag.
* Drop off the Bag on a Friday or Saturday and pick up the next Saturday.

***2.***  ***On or before Day 1 of your Food Drive***

* Distribute supplies to scouts
* Have scouts distribute a Lunches With Love Food bag ***and copy of the flyer*** to neighbors.
* A personal touch goes a long way here – See some additional tips below….

***3.***  ***On the Last Day of your Food Drive***

* go back to where you left bags and pick up if needed
* Bring donations to the designated location determined by your troop for drop off.

***4.  Get Creative***

There are many creative ideas on ways to have a food drive. These are ones I have known scouts to use.

* Use email list serves such as Nextdoor and Facebook to advertise the drive and pick up that way too
* Ask more than just 5 neighbors
* See if your school or church wants to join in
* Ask family, friends, people at church or work
* Check your own cupboards and closets

Other ideas are a penny collection or Dimes for Daisy events where funds raised are used to purchase food items needed; Place a flyer or donation jar at your cookie booths; Host a food drive booth at local stores or events.

**Here are some additional tips from other food drives:**

\* Scouts have had best results when they knock on peoples' doors and get a commitment that the household will participate.

\* Wear your scout uniform when distributing bags and talking to neighbors – it helps validate both your Troop and the overall Lunches With Love Food drive.