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Press Release

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Oregon FFA and Les Schwab Tire Centers raised 435,171 meals for those in need this holiday season

Oregon FFA and Les Schwab Tire Centers believe no one should be hungry, especially as the holiday season is approaching. Many Oregon residents struggle to provide food for themselves and their families. In fact, according to Feeding America, 510,080 Oregonians are food insecure. That's about 1 in 8 individuals. (Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap). It is for this reason Oregon FFA, Les Schwab Tire Centers, Wilco, and Grange Co-op stores across Oregon geared up during the month of October to #DriveAwayHunger.

The Drive Away Hunger initiative is one that Oregon FFA and Les Schwab Tire Centers has been partnering on annually since 2015. Each year Oregon FFA members, advisors, volunteers, and our partnering stores and newspapers across Oregon have worked together to grow the impact of the initiative. "Partnering with Les Schwab for the annual Drive Away Hunger initiative gives our FFA members a way to contribute to their communities while developing new skills," said Shawn Dooley, CEO of the Oregon FFA. "Members organize a wide range of local events to collect cash and nonperishable food during the month-long drive. In the process they learn about food insecurity in their own communities and the importance of volunteering and philanthropy. The FFA and Les Schwab share many of the same values so working together to "Drive Away Hunger" is a good collaboration that benefits our neighbors." said Dooley. This year the #DriveAwayHunger initiative raised more food and dollars to help those in need than any year prior. **In total 580,084 pounds of food were raised.** That equals **435,171 meals** to help those in need this holiday season.

FFA chapters across the state were creative in their effort to collect food and cash donations. Pine-Eagle FFA held a "Movie Night" where attendance was granted by donating a can of food or making a \$1 donation. North Powder FFA organized a food drive with their local elementary school. Food donations were collected daily by FFA members and the winning elementary classes were awarded a party put on by FFA members with activities such as face painting, mummy wrap, apple cider pressing, cake walk, musical chairs, etc. The food and money raised was presented to the local food bank in North Powder during the first week of November. Adrian FFA members gleaned local farmers fields for potatoes and onions that they sorted, bagged, and distributed through their community and to visiting football teams during



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home games. Like Adrian FFA, Hood River FFA members gleaned local apple and pear orchards. They also coordinated donations of pizza, drinks, and cookies from local businesses that they sold during a “Skate Night” with all proceed benefiting the initiative.

In addition to local chapter efforts, community members were encouraged to drop food off at local Les Schwab, Wilco, or Grange Co-op stores, and collection bags were distributed by the Capital Press and EO Media. “This time of year is one for hope and joy, and we hope that is what those in need feel as they receive the food we have been able to provide through this initiative.” said Christa Carlon, Stewardship Officer for the Oregon FFA Foundation. “It is because of the help from our participating stores, newspapers, FFA members, advisors, volunteers, and all community members who donated food and time that this year’s initiative was a great success.” said Carlon. Most of the food raised through this initiative will be distributed by the Oregon Food Bank Network and will remain in the communities in which it was donated.

The Oregon FFA is part of the National FFA Organization, formerly known as the Future Farmers of America, and is a national youth organization of 700,170 student members — all preparing for leadership and careers in the science, business and technology of agriculture. There are 8,612 local FFA chapters in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Oregon FFA has approximately 12,000 members in 110 chapters throughout the state. The FFA mission is *to make a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.*

To learn more about the initiative please visit the Oregon FFA Facebook page or #DriveAwayHunger. To learn more about FFA visit www.oregonffa.com or www.ffa.org.

Pictures:

Pictured below Hood River FFA members gleaning apples from a local orchard.





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Pictured below Adrian FFA members sorting and bagging potatoes that were gleaned from a local farmers field.



Pictured below, 2019-2020 Oregon FFA State Officers with Les Schwab employees at the Albany, OR store.

