

## Giving back:

### Volunteers help give Thanksgiving meals to homebound seniors



John Markon / The Daily News

CAP volunteers Kathy Bates (left) and Lisa Chavez assemble Thanksgiving meals and place them in bags for delivery Thursday morning.

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The Keegans have turned giving into part of their Thanksgiving tradition.

The Longview family were one of nine to deliver free hot meals —which included turkey, stuffing, sweet potatoes, vegetables, fruit cocktail, a roll and a slice of pumpkin pie - to 84 homebound seniors Thursday.

"The day wouldn't be complete without doing this," Helen Keegan said. "When I was young, we didn't have a lot, and when I became a mother, I wanted to give back and show my son how to give back."

This marks the sixth year the Lower Columbia Community Action Program and volunteers have delivered food and a friendly face to individuals throughout Cowlitz County.

"For those that are alone and have nothing, you can tell it brings them so much," said Keegan, who has volunteered for the last three years.

Volunteers Rama Mitchell of Longview and Stephanie Moyers of Rainier remembered once delivering a meal to an elderly woman in Woodland who had been snowed in and hadn't seen anyone in two weeks.

"People are just really excited because some of them don't have families," Moyers said.

Tammy Davies, CAP's programs manager for senior services, said the number of meals delivered over the past two years has started to decline. The most meals delivered in one year was 150 in 2007. Davies attributed the decline to the rough economy that has forced more generations to live together, leaving fewer alone on the holidays.

But there's still a need out there, and volunteers say helping strikes at the heart of what the day is all about.

"This is what you do on Thanksgiving," Mike Keegan said. "You think of others besides yourself."