

Help Warehouse gets a helping hand for holidays



Amy Fischer/ The Daily News In the CAP Help Warehouse parking lot Saturday afternoon, R.A. Long High School student Audrey Hamill (at center), CAP volunteer Russ Neely (in red cap) and Longview Early Edition Rotary volunteer Anthony Drake (in black hoodie) unload a pickup truck full of canned food donations for Walk and Knock.

[By Amy M.E. Fischer / The Daily News](#) The Daily News Online | Posted: Saturday, December 4, 2010

[There's still time to donate](#)

Bags of food still may be brought to the CAP building, 1526 Commerce Ave. Money can be donated to Help Warehouse at the same address. Recommended items are canned soup, rice, peanut butter, baby food, canned vegetables and fruits, beans, tuna, canned chicken, pasta sauce, cold and hot cereals, granola bars, nuts, toilet paper, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, deodorant, diapers, laundry detergent and dish soap.

It's like Santa's visits in reverse.

Every year on the first Saturday in November since 1985, hundreds of Cowlitz County residents load paper bags full of canned goods and toiletries and leave them on the front porch for the community's largest annual food drive.

Dozens of Walk and Knock volunteers drive up and down residential streets, filling up their cars, trucks and mini vans with the bags and bring them to Lower Columbia Community Action Program's Help Warehouse on Commerce Avenue in Longview.

There, volunteers from throughout the community — businesses, schools, churches and service clubs — unite to unload and sort into the Help Warehouse. Another team of volunteers packs the bags' contents into cardboard boxes that will be distributed to eight food banks in Cowlitz and Wahkiakum counties.

Saturday, Walk and Knock collected 70,600 pounds of food and \$3,053 in cash. Additional checks likely will arrive by mail this week, said Alan Rose, CAP's community relations director.

Last year's drive brought in 77,000 pounds of goods and \$2,600 cash on the first day. Another \$6,570 arrived in the mail the following week.

"Once again this year, we are so grateful for the community's generosity, especially during these difficult times when people are hurting," said Lois Shelton, Help Warehouse Program Manager. "It takes a lot of hands and a lot of hearts to make Walk and Knock happen."

Although food donations were slightly down from last year, cash donations were up \$453, Rose noted.

"We think the word is getting out that Help Warehouse can buy a lot more food with people's money than they themselves can in the stores," Rose stated in a press release.

Through discount food-buying services, Help Warehouse can purchase food for as low as 10 cents a pound, he said.

Next year, CAP will try to distribute Walk and Knock paper bags more widely. In addition to inserting them in The Daily News, the Scouts might distribute them, Rose said. CAP also will place more emphasis on putting bags out early in the morning, since some volunteer groups begin at 9 a.m.

As usual, some people called to say their bags weren't picked up. CAP will track those areas where bags were missed to find out why, Rose said.