

Junior challenges local businesses to donate food

By Bailey VenJohn
Staff reporter

Food is one of the most basic necessities for life. Those who get enough of it don't think twice about eating while others in our own communities struggle to always have a meal on the table.

Brandi Young, religion/philosophy and business administration junior, is working to change that.

"We thought the food pantry would be a good thing to start with because it's at Grace United Methodist Church so it is really close. We thought it would be

easy and since everybody went back to school and school is expensive, we were afraid that the kids may not get enough food because their parents are having to pay for school," said Young.

In Discipleship, at the beginning of each year there are four committees that have different purposes. Students learn about each one and write down their top three in order and are then placed into a committee.

Juniors are the leaders in the committees so Young was put in charge of her group of eight. The goal of her committee was to

be mission focused. Young said, "We wanted to help people out either in Winfield, on campus, or outside of Winfield, if possible."

Young started the food pantry escapade on campus. They raised 130 items and \$40. Their initial goal was 300 items but Young said, any bit helps.

After regrouping from the campus attempt the committee decided they wanted to challenge local businesses.

Their goal for the businesses was to raise 300 items in three weeks. Young said she was not expecting the businesses to want to participate but she could not have been more wrong.

S and Y industries, a computer and electronics manufacturing company, was the first company approached.

Young chose them because her parents work there and it gave her a foot in the door.

S and Y Industries raised 1,801 items and \$10. Young was pleasantly surprised with the business blowing their original goals out of the water.

Following S and Y, Webster Combustion Technologies was up next for the challenge. They raised 2,136 items.

Galaxie Business Equipment raised the most so far with 2,502 items taking on the challenge after Webster. Rubbermaid collected 1,773 items and Calmar is currently raising goods.

So far, none of the companies asked have declined the challenge. Some have even taken the dare to the next level creating department competitions within the business.

"One department from S and Y went, after work, to the grocery store and bought food together," said Young.

Young aspires to continue the business challenge because of the success she has had with it. She said, "We hope to keep it going throughout the school year. Maybe next year I might try to do it for my senior project and get it to where these businesses every month take care of the food pantry."

Overall Young was not expecting this level of success. She's thoroughly enjoying it and the positive impact it is creating. She claims her favorite part is simple, that it is going so well.

"I'm getting businesses involved and people are benefitting, there is nothing bad coming from

it. People are receiving food, coworkers are building relationships especially if they are competing within the company," said Young.

She is also helping build a positive image for the businesses involved. The businesses asked to participate so far are all located in Industrial Park, just east of town.

"There's not a lot of interaction between Industrial Park and town. I feel like Winfield as a whole is kind of like, "Oh all the big businesses just care about making money and products," but that's not it. It's been cool to get them involved," said Young.

The Winfield Courier has also helped the cause by doing an article and picture every month so that the people in Winfield see the companies helping and that they don't just care about themselves.

Thus far Young's food pantry project has raised 8,350 items and \$1,960.

"That's almost 10,000 items. Winfield's population is like 13,000 so that is almost one item per person," said Young.

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Brandi Young, religion/philosophy and business administration junior, workers Cliff Normore, and Donnie Peckham stand proudly in front of a truck bed full of groceries for the local food pantry. (Kylie Stamper/Collegian photographer)

New distribution in activity grants hopes to pull more students

By Kylie Stamper
Staff reporter

The word on campus lately has been the rumor that next fall's incoming freshmen will receive more money in their activity grants than the rest of the student body.

Yes, their activity grants will go up to \$5,000. No, they are not getting more money.

The issue admissions has faced the past couple years has been trying to get students in the door to come to Southwestern. The main issue for these students is cost.

The solution: increase the amount of money presented up-front in the activity grants.

This will ultimately increase the number of people exploring Southwestern seriously enough to visit and ask for an estimate of financial aid which will, hopefully, result in more interest and a larger incoming class.

The process: admissions hired Noel-Levitz, a higher education consulting firm, to assist in plans to make the solution happen.

Brenda Hicks, director of financial aid, said, "Noel-Levitz researched three years of financial aid offers and awards and asked the question, 'what kind of financial aid package does it take for a family with an EFC of 'x' to attend Southwestern.'" The EFC is the estimated family contribution based on results from the FAFSA.

"What we are trying to do for prospective students is to show them as much scholarship money up-front as possible. We want to get the word out by proof of showing scholarships and showing that we are the affordable option," said Marla Sexson, vice president for enrollment management.

The result: the admissions staff decided on redistributing scholarship funds so prospective students

see more up-front. The school has a pool of money that can be used for scholarships. That pool had to stay the same for the upcoming year. Instead of raising tuition and increasing all scholarships, the decision was made to pull money from the academic scholarships and need-based funds to add \$1,000 to activity grants.

Now next year's freshmen will see a \$5,000 activity grant rather than \$4,000 but, in combination with the academic and need-based funds, each student will still be receiving the same amount overall.

Sexson said, "Everybody gets an activity scholarship. So by putting more money into the scholarship up-front, they know they are getting \$5000. It allows prospective students to view us and decide if SC is the place for them. It's not like they're getting additional money, because we took some off of academic schol-

arships to increase the activity scholarship. So it all balances out; it's just a different philosophy."

Hicks said although the funds have been shifted around, there is still a delicate balance to watch out for.

"You don't want to put too much up-front because then you're locked in, but we want people to afford it so we have to keep some need-based aid back there to make sure the money is going where it needs to go," she said.

Allyson Moon, chair of the admissions and retention committee, said even though the new students are seeing more money up-front, which may cause increased enrollment, the relationships are still the same.

She said, "With all these tools that we have I think it's more important than ever that we build that relationship with the prospective student and that we help them understand how they can fit

into our programs."

She said one thing the committee looks out for during this process is making sure that the changes will make a difference. So far, the admissions teams are seeing success.

The final word: estimates are up. Numbers and visits are about double what they were at this time last year.

Last year at this time, we did 58 estimates, this year we have done 95. "We are doing way more estimates than we ever have done at this time. There are a lot more people staying at the table. It's amazing what \$500-\$1,000 more on the table can do," Hicks said, "So it's working and I am extremely satisfied. Because I love this place and I want it to succeed. I think this is going to help us."

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