



home > city hall > press releases

Youth Advisory Committee Teens Serve Seniors

Teen-agers from the City's Youth Advisory Committee brightened the holidays for dozens of seniors by providing the ingredients for several tasty meals with contributions from Perris residents, schools and businesses.

More than 30 senior citizens lined up Dec. 23 to select from a variety of canned, bagged and boxed food items to prepare for their holiday meals.

In addition to collecting hundreds of containers of macaroni and cheese, corn, beans, pasta, peanut butter, tomatoes, cranberries, stuffing, gravy and other assorted products, the YAC representatives also raised \$540 in cash contributions. With that, the high-schoolers went out and purchased 70 chickens to serve as the centerpiece of the holiday meals.

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Perris Youth Advisory Committee member Aasiyah DeAndrade, 16, helps resident Gola Long with her selections during the holiday food-drive giveaway at the Senior Center.

Recreation Center Leader Jessica Munoz said YAC members Aasiyah DeAndrade, 16, Jenna Owens, 16, Viviana Pavon-Cortes, 16, and Jacqueline Reliford, 15, "did an amazing job" in organizing the holiday-food drive and distributing the collected merchandise. Aasiyah, Jenna and Jacqueline helped distribute the bounty on Dec. 23.

"It's nice to help out during the holidays," Jenna said. "Knowing that I'm helping someone in need makes me happy." Munoz said community spirit makes up a big part of the YAC experience.

"It's so exciting the difference a small group of people can make," Munoz said. "I am very pleased with the initiative shown by our YAC teen-agers."



Perris senior citizens line up to select various foodstuffs collected by the City's Youth Advisory Committee.

The seniors who received the collected food were grateful too.

"This will provide me with a very nice Christmas dinner and a nice holiday," said Rosa Sanchez, 63. "It's great for seniors. It makes me happy."

So was Dave Collemacine, 64.

"There are a lot of needy people who will benefit from these donations," he said. "I think our Perris teen-agers have done a fabulous job of collecting all this food and distributing it. It makes me feel phenomenal."

Gola Long, 80, widow of former Perris Mayor Lenwood Long, called the YAC volunteers "young people on the right track" to help their neighbors and community.

"They are the kinds of people we aspire them to be," Long said as she picked up dressing and gravy to supplement her holiday meal.

Then Long told Aasiyah, who helped her collect food for the holiday fare to "keep up the good work."



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