



Campus events help fight hunger

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Whether it is raising money for the Tennessee Tech Food Pantry or packing backpacks full of food for school children in the Upper Cumberland, the Tech campus comes together a couple a times a year to fight hunger.

Earlier this month, residents, faculty and staff from Tech's seven Learning Villages — Service and Leadership, Arts and Media, Men's, Engineering, Global, Environmental, and Women's — filled backpacks with food and supplies for the Tech Backpack Project. The Tech Backpack Project delivers food and drinks to Upper Cumberland school children facing food insecurity over the weekends.

In September, the Learning Villages began collecting donations for the project. This year's effort was a huge success.

"The villages collected 4,200 food items resulting in over 420 backpacks — that is spectacular!" said Michelle Huddleston, Tech's service coordinator. "That is nine weeks of backpacks going out to 45 Upper Cumberland kids who are identified as food insecure by their teachers. It is quite possible this event will allow us to send out five extra backpacks every fall."

Meanwhile, Tech students dealing with food insecurities are helped through the Tech Food Pantry, which distributes non-perishable foods, basic household items and toiletry essentials to students, faculty, staff and any person working at Tech through a third-party company.

Opened in fall 2013, the food pantry feeds 30-35 people a week and thrives on donations. In addition to items, the pantry also needs funds to purchase things that are needed but not always donated.

Those extra needs are met with an annual campus fundraiser, Heating Up the Quad. Sponsored by the Office of the Provost and part of the Tech Togetherness Initiative, the annual event brings departments on campus together to cook up tasty food and distribute it on campus for a nominal fee.

The 2018 version of Heating Up the Quad featured 32 teams cooking chili, soup, chowder, wings and desserts. With an estimated crowd of more than 900, 700 of which were students, the event brought in more than \$3,500 for the food pantry.

"I want to give a special thanks to our wonderful Tech Togetherness Committee for making this event bigger and better every year," said Elizabeth Sofia, executive assistant to the provost. "This is what the Tech Togetherness Initiative is all about, bringing our campus community together."

The goal of Tech Togetherness is to bridge the gaps and create stronger relationships between administrators, faculty, staff and the Tech community at large. Members of the Tech Togetherness committee are Sofia, Suzann Hensley, Sarah Smith, Amy McCoy, Tricia McKanzie, Karin Gilbert, Mary Benedict, Michelle Huddleston, DeLayne Miller, Amanda Thatcher, Alex Callis, Ashley Wright, Amy Swafford, Cheryl Sullivan and Melinda Anderson.

"Our cook teams and volunteers provided some great food and atmosphere while **the Office of Sustainability helped us continue in our efforts to make this event green.**" Sofia said. "We appreciate Suzann Hensley working tirelessly with all of the cook teams and our outside sponsors, such as Amerigas, Pepsi, Marcos, Outback Steakhouse and many more. I feel privileged to work with such a wonderful group of individuals, supporting such a worthy cause."



Heating Up the Quad, an annual fundraiser for the Tech Food Pantry, featured more than 30 cooking teams feeding more than 900 people. The campus also comes together for the Tech Backpack Project to help fight hunger in the Upper Cumberland.

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