



By Tim Linscott
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A goal of \$5,000 was set forth by Adams Bank and Trust to help stock the Perkins County food pantry and the community responded in a huge way.

A total of \$8,914.54 in goods and money was given to the project and the goal was exceeded halfway through the challenge.

In November the challenge was made by Adams Bank and Trust to donate \$5,000 in food and money by Dec. 31. Mindy Dickinson, one of the organizers of the project for Adams Bank and Trust, explained that by mid-December, the goal had been reached. People kept giving and helping those in need through the pantry.

"Whether it was one can of food or several thousands of dollars, it took everything to get to our final amount," Dickinson said. "I cannot thank the community enough for what they have done, it is just so awesome."

Being involved with the project has been an unbelievable experience for Dickinson and others involved.

"This has been overwhelming and humbling," Dickinson said. "The community gave upon the amount asked for and so many people thanked us for doing this, but the thank you should be turned right back to them."

There were weeks when a large amount of food items would come pouring in for the pantry with little monetary donations and the following week it would be just the opposite, according to organizers of the project.

Employees of Mid-America Agri-Products, Wheatland, LLC, was one of the top donors, giving \$2,000 to the pantry.

The pantry is facilitated by the county ministerial association and Russ Gaar, pastor at Grant Free Evangelical Church, was stunned to learn the final tally donated to the pantry.

"Wow. All I can say is wow," he said. "That is just amazing. I am overwhelmed by the response from people."

Currently the pantry is being used more as there is typically an upswing in use during the

holiday and winter months.

“The items donated are being used even at this given moment,” Gaar said. “Everything is going to a good cause.”

For now the shelves are loaded, the most stocked they have ever been. The project by Adams Bank and Trust is the single largest drive the pantry has ever had but Gaar knows, eventually, more will be needed to help families.

The pantry helps between two and three families a week.

“All of us ministers are excited. This has really helped put us in a good place to meet the needs that are in the community this winter,” Gaar said.

Dickinson hopes the challenge continues next year.

“It is a needed event, whether it is a challenge or a community awareness,” Dickinson said. “If we sparked peoples’ minds and allowed them to know there is a high demand in the community, whether we continue the challenge or someone else takes it over, this has been fantastic.”

Organizers applauded the many civic and school groups that held their own challenges and events to help raise funds and food for the pantry.

Adams Bank and Trust (Madrid and Grant locations) matched 50 percent of the food donated to the pantry with a donation of their own.

“A big thank you to everyone in Perkins County that participated in this event,” Dickinson said, adding that a thank you sign will be outside of the Grant location for several days as a way of giving recognition to many people who gave to the pantry.

Seeing school and civic groups come together to help the pantry had another benefit, according to Gaar: it helped spread the word of the need in the community for assistance with food.

“It was great seeing all of the fundraising spread the word that we have a resource here and it is being used,” Gaar said.

National Honor Society members at Perkins County High School and several volunteers in the community have come forward to help stock shelves and clean the pantry in recent weeks.

“I want to thank everyone for their donations and help,” Gaar said. “Adams Bank and Trust did a lot of work on making this happen and this has just been incredible.”