

Adopt-a-Basket Donations Needed to Help Local Families

Contributed by Rebecca Lauck Cleary
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Deliveries set for Nov. 19

OXFORD, Miss. - With the spirit of giving in mind, University of Mississippi faculty, staff and students are again participating in the annual "Adopt-A-Basket" program to provide Thanksgiving dinners for families in the Oxford area.

Donations of specific nonperishable food items, as well as gift cards, are needed so that more than 200 baskets can be delivered Nov. 19.

"For the past four years, students, faculty and staff have worked together to give to the community through donating to Adopt-a-Basket," said Valeria Ross, assistant dean of students for multicultural affairs and volunteer services. "Over the tenure of this event, more than 800 baskets have been donated to local Lafayette-Oxford families, and it has become an anticipated event by those who donate baskets and volunteer as well as by those who receive the baskets."

Interfaith Compassion Ministries, Aramark & Catering Services and UM personnel provide names of the families who can benefit from the Thanksgiving baskets.

Besides donating items and gift cards for the families, volunteers can help assemble and pack boxes, Ross said. Individuals interested in volunteering their time can contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 662-915-7247 or vross@olemiss.edu. Ross encourages every person who can contribute by either donating items or volunteering to help pack the boxes to commit to participating in the effort.

Physical

Plant is donating the boxes for the items and Phi Delta Theta Fraternity has agreed for the third consecutive year to both load and deliver all the baskets.

Items that

individuals, student organizations or university departments should purchase to fill a basket include a \$35 gift card from Wal-Mart, Kroger or Big Star, along with the items listed below. The gift card is given to families to help them buy perishables such as turkey or ham, milk, eggs, butter, rolls and pie crusts.

The list

of nonperishable items needed for each basket includes:

- 2 large cans of corn
- 2 large cans of green beans
- 2 cans of chicken broth
- 1 can of cranberry sauce
- 3 pounds of sweet potatoes
- 3 pounds of white potatoes
- 1 can of sweetened condensed milk
- 5 pounds of sugar
- 5 pounds of corn meal
- 1 large onion
- 1 bunch of celery

Coordinators ask that volunteers gather all the specified items and refrain from buying items not on the list. The items should be dropped off at the Union Ballroom from noon to 5 p.m. Nov. 18 or 8-10:30 a.m. Nov. 19.

The
Adopt-A-Basket initiative began more than four years ago as part of the
Mississippi Universities Service Into Caring project, involving the
state's eight public institutions of higher learning.