

Stocking the Pantry with Hope and Love

Submitted by Joyce Corey

Throughout the pandemic, there has been a constant conversation about how to make good use of one's time. Coach Michael Blanchard is trying his best to do that for the over 90 wrestlers in the Nutley Jr. Raiders wrestling program.

"We can't have a season right now, but we are still a team. I'm trying to keep our group engaged and focused on positive ways to use our collective energy. We're sliding from disappointment to achievement - with purpose, with truth, with passion, and with love for one another."

On Friday, December 11th, the program was able to deliver over 60 bags and boxes to the Nutley Family Service Bureau Food Pantry. The food drive was conducted with a massive social media campaign that generated a large response from the whole town. The hope and love that was delivered came at a time when many families are suffering under the oppressive weight of COVID-19.

"No one does anything alone in this life. I was fortunate to have a lot of good people helping us be successful in this endeavor," Blanchard stated.

Special thanks to small business owners, Jason Braitsch and Chapman Manzer. Both helped donate pounds of pasta, beans, and other non-perishable items. Their contributions accounted for about a quarter of the donations. Jason owns and runs local deli Vilardo's and Chapman owns and operates Manzer's Landscaping and Design, located in NY. Both are Nutley residents who understand



Coaches and kids helped move the food into the pantry on Friday, December 11th (above). Five cars full of donations to help stock the Nutley Family Service Bureau Food Pantry at a time when COVID-19 has caused many families to suffer (left).

the value of giving back to the community.

Additional thanks

to coaches Darren Finkelstein, Saverio Marinelli, Mike Siljanoski, Anthony Haines, and Chapman Manzer for helping load up their cars to get the goods to the pantry. Many young wrestlers helped with bringing the food into the pantry.

"Our young people have learned the value of compassion and selflessness throughout our drive," Blanchard continued.

"We have so much gratitude to the many who donated for the drive. The gifts of food and non-perishable items will help so many families. Thanks also to Peg Conca and the many others at Nutley Family Service Bureau Food Pantry for helping us coordinate our efforts." ■



Live Music Thursday, Friday, Saturday!

Check Website, Facebook or Instagram for Details



We Carry Every NFL game!
Sunday Brunch 12-4pm



789 BLOOMFIELD AVE. NUTLEY 973-542-8676 theoakleykitchen.com