



Holiday Helpers

By Krista Perry/Daily News staff
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MEDWAY —

A group of college students made sure local families are well-fed for the holidays yesterday when they handed out 60 ham-filled baskets to residents in need.

The MassBay Community College students are in a class called Group Process, which aims to teach how to work productively in a group and to respect cultural diversity.

One of the seven students in the group, Tammy Reed, is a Medway resident and assistant director of the Medway Village Church Food Pantry.

Reed knew that the Greater Boston Food Bank, which supplies the church with 40 to 60 percent of its food, ran out of hams early this holiday season and would not be able to supply the Medway pantry. When Reed's class was assigned a group community service project, Reed suggested the idea to help the pantry.

So Reed and the rest of the students - Wendy Chappell of Marlborough, Jen Weiner of Ashland, Holly Cavanaugh of Walpole, Morvane Sidney of Framingham, Alex Ferreira of Milford and Sepideh Taksokhan of Southborough - asked local businesses to donate money or gift cards toward the baskets.

Each basket has a \$30 Walmart gift card, two hams, candy, a Christmas DVD, lotion and pies - about a \$50 value, Reed said.

Reed said she knows Medway's needy will appreciate the baskets. There is always a line out the door when the pantry opens, she said. The pantry is open on Wednesdays from 3:45 to 4:45 p.m.

"All different types of people come in that are struggling," said Reed. "Seniors, younger people, families, blue-collar workers, seasonal people, people who used to have a stable job."

Chappell said making and handing out the baskets keeps things in perspective.

"It makes the struggles we have seem insignificant compared to others," she said. "Any of us could be one paycheck away from coming here."

Taksokhan said participating in the project has made her more aware of suburban poverty.

"It was surprising to me that people here go to bed hungry," she said.

Weiner said the people in line would never have expected to get a \$30 gift card to use on personal items, more food, or Christmas presents.

"I'm sure they're super stressed out about Christmas if they're coming here," she said.

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