



Children Helping Children

TIPS ON HOW TO RUN A HARVEST DRIVE

After organizing the sorting and packing at Western High for the last few years I have learned a few things that I do want to pass on to you that you might find helpful.

Your key steps to ensuring that the process runs smoothly are as follows:

1. Print signs for each type of item that you have collected i.e. pasta, macaroni, and cheese, pasta sauce, rice, peanut butter, jelly, etc. Laminate them if you would like them to last year to year.
2. Put the signs up on the walls of your packing space according to the way you wish to pack. Leave plenty of room between items to make it easy to stay organized.
3. Type up your packing list in the order that your room is set up. (Or type your list and set up the room accordingly) Fill in the quantities for each item after you have your counts.
 - Please refer to the Suggested Packing List located on the school resource tab as a guideline.
 - You need to print less of the lists if you have multiple columns on each list.
 - The little lottery pencils at the supermarket are quite useful for checking things off during the packing process. You can ask a store manager while doing your Harvest Days or order them from Amazon for very little money.
4. Print out and laminate a set of numbers from 1- however many bags you will be packing which will be used to determine the set of bags each group will fill.
5. Utilize your shopping carts and flatbeds to bring items that are dropped off to their designated places in your gym. (It is helpful to have student supervisors make sure that items are placed in the correct areas in an organized manner)
6. Check dates for expired items, then place cans date side up once they have been checked. Bring expired items to designated boxes at the center of your gym. These items can be brought to Lifenet for Families or thrown out.
7. Count each of your items to determine how many of each you will give to each of your families, and to know where you are short. We do want to purchase most items on the list if you do not have enough to provide at least one to each family. Please shop your shortages with funds raised or inform the Harvest Drive team where you need some help with shortages. We do not generally fill the shortages on non-food items.
8. Have students number your bags. You will need 7-10 bags per family. Number each bag front and back in each group. So you will have 7 -10 bags for family 1, 7-10 bags for family 2, etc. [Please note that we provide some extra bags.] This year we are working to ensure that all of our recipient families receive as much food as possible. Our goal is to further assist schools that have been successfully packing only 6 bags in the past.



9. Line up your bags in piles in the middle of your packing space. Place the groupings in order, making rows where the carts can get through to pack the bags.

10. Open your bags.

11. Organize your student volunteers into groups of 3 or 4. Each group will take a list, a number, and a flatbed or grocery cart. They walk the room and "shop" for their family. Once they have completed the list, they pack the bags of the number they have been given. (Again, it is helpful to have student supervisors assisting shoppers with the more complicated items and/or when they need to get multiples of a certain item.)

12. After the bags are packed, the group returns the completed number and picks up another number. Repeat this until all bags are filled.

13. You will have extras of many items. These can be utilized in several ways. You can pack some extra bags for your larger families and after this, put the remaining items into the bags on the floor.

14. If you still have significant numbers of extras, you can

-stock a pantry at your school.

-pack bags or boxes to be distributed prior to winter break. We all know that many of our students are not eating without the meals they receive at school.

-forward this food to a local food bank that assists families in your area year-round. We call this "Paying it forward" and it is a great way to continue to help our community.

-If you plan to "Pay it Forward" please make sure you notify potential recipients that they should be available to pick up the extras immediately after distribution. Let them know that you cannot guarantee anything but that they should have a large vehicle or vehicles and drivers available at a specific time should you have food to share.

Being systematic pays off and greatly reduces the chaos of the packing process.