



Office of the Mayor

News Release

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City honors 'Food for Thought' backpack program coordinator at food bank as Volunteer of the Month that feeds students in need on weekends

MARYSVILLE – “Food for Thought” backpack program coordinator Amy Howell was honored as Volunteer of the Month on April 28 for a food bank program that provides nutritious food for students in need on weekends.

As a passionate volunteer at the Marysville Community Food Bank, Howell set out to solve a hunger issue prevalent across many communities, including Marysville. Local School District statistics stated that 75 percent of school-aged children had free or reduced lunches provided to them on school days.

Howell asked the question, “What happens to that same 75 percent on weekends?”

Solving that problem was the inspiration and the idea for the “Food for Thought” program.

Food for Thought collects donations of nutritional “ready-to-eat” food and snacks that can be provided to students for the weekend.

When the program first started toward the end of the school year in 2012, just more than 20 students from one elementary school were served. Under the leadership of Howell, now 253 students from ten schools are now provided with the weekend meals.

“Amy enjoys what she does, and her passion and enthusiasm for Food for Thought inspires us all, and her efforts have a huge impact on the children fed” said Mayor Jon Nehring at the City Council meeting where she was honored. Volunteerism runs in her family. Her mother, JoAnn Sewell, was named Volunteer of the Month in October.

To feed 20 kids on the 37 weekends of the school year costs \$5,000, Nehring said.

Funding aside, “The payback in smiles and gratitude from the parents and kids says enough about the value that program provides,” Nehring said.



Howell works determinedly to seek out monetary donations to fund the program's needs. In fact, the cost of feeding just 20 kids for all 37 weeks of the school year is approximately \$5000.

To garner more financial support, Howell applied for and was awarded a \$3,000 Community Development Block Grant from the City.

In addition to feeding the children and families of Marysville, Howell cares for her own three children, Curtis, Chris, and Jacob, and her husband, Jeff, in addition to working as a grocery store checker. Needless to say, she has her hands full.

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