Make Thanksgiving brighter for a local family

November 1, 2016

Through November 17, employees and friends of Los Alamos National Laboratory can donate nonperishable food items to be distributed to families around Northern New Mexico just in time for Thanksgiving.

This year, food distribution will be more streamlined, thanks to the Lab's new partnership with The Food Depot. "We get the food from the Lab's designated drop-off points and take it to our warehouse where the Food Depot can pick it up," explains April Lopez of the Lab's Community Partnerships Office.

From there, "The Food Depot will bring the donated food items to its warehouse in Santa Fe to prepare holiday food boxes for families," continues Jill Gentry, The Food Depot's director of development. "Lab volunteers will work to create boxes that have all of the components needed to create a holiday meal." Boxes will then be made available to more than 13 Northern New Mexico organizations that have historically received such boxes to distribute to families.

Laboratory employees are once again encouraged to participate in the annual Take Your Turkey To Work Day, which is Tuesday, November 22. The Food Depot will manage the collection of these frozen turkeys. “Our fleet of refrigerated trucks will keep the turkeys at temperature until they can be provided to the distributing organizations later in the day,” Gentry explains.

Traditionally, the Laboratory food drive has helped hundreds of families. “This year, we expect to provide holiday food boxes and a turkey to 400 families in Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, and Taos counties,” Gentry says. “We would be thrilled to meet this goal.”

Every day, tens of thousands of hungry Northern New Mexicans turn to emergency food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters to help feed their families. Together, the Laboratory and the Food Depot are making sure those organizations have food to give.

Items needed to fill a donation box include instant mashed potatoes, boxed stuffing, canned evaporated milk, canned vegetables, canned sweet potatoes or cranberries, a four-pound bag of sugar, a five-pound bag of flour or biscuit mix, a quart of vegetable oil, boxed cake or cookie mix, and a jar of coffee, tea, or fruit-drink mix.

Donations can be dropped off at the Lab’s Community Partnerships Office (1619 Central Ave.) in downtown Los Alamos or at various locations around the Laboratory—look for the giant cardboard boxes labeled “Holiday Food Drive.”

In 2015, The Food Depot distributed 5.3 million pounds of food—enough for 4.4 million meals—to hungry members of our community. “The generosity of the community is amazing,” says Gentry. “We are thrilled to partner with LANL to help make the holiday food drive a success this year.”