



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAYETTE COUNTY CYS COMPETING IN SOUPER BOWL FOOD DRIVE

Uniontown, PA – Reba Stramat is a big sports fan. She also is a Case Aide III for Fayette County Children and Youth Services (CYS) and knows how hard life can be for some county families, especially since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Stramat came up with a way to help those families through her love of athletics.

Rather than start a football pool during this year's NFL playoffs, Stramat created the Souper Bowl, a food drive in which she and her coworkers would compete to see who could score the most points by donating the most food for families in need.

"We talked about having a food drive at the beginning of the year," Stramat said. "I'm a big sports fan in general, especially football. And I know I work with a bunch of very competitive people. They're very generous, but I know they're very competitive."

So, Stramat tapped into both that generosity and that competitive streak, asking coworkers to donate food and other products families could use.

"I set it up like a football game. I looked at the calendar and figured out if we did four weeks, we could do it by quarters," she said. "I talked to my supervisor, Rebecca Taylor."

She divided her coworkers into teams – Island vs. Mainland – based on the two sections of the building, with each person's points counting both for themselves and for their team. Stramat said products that aren't often donated, such as feminine products and personal hygiene products, were assigned a higher point value than more commonly donated items. Also in the high-value category were items such as Bisquick and Velveeta meals, with which a meal can be made adding only water, rather than families needing to provide extra ingredients.

Stramat said the winning team will get a trophy, and the MVP on each team – the teammate who has accrued the most points – will receive a medal and a gift card. But the most coveted prize is simply bragging rights.

"Trust me, bragging rights are going very high over here," Stramat laughed.

Stramat said the response to the Souper Bowl has been greater than she could have anticipated.

"I'm just overwhelmed by the response of the people donating," she said. "I have to mention my coworker, Ashley Lee. She is close to 1,000 points herself."

Lee and her husband also donated a shelving unit to help store collected goods. The shelves will not count toward Lee's bowl total.

Fayette CYS Deputy Administrator John Fritts called Stramat “a phenomenal person” and said lack of food is one of the things caseworkers have been noticing the most during visits with families throughout the pandemic.

Fritts said he is impressed with what Stramat’s food drive has been able to accomplish in a short time.

“It’s kind of amazing what they pulled together,” he said. “It looks like a mini mart in here. I don’t think people realize how much these workers do.”

Fritts said CYS workers often go above and beyond the scope of their jobs.

Stramat said the credit she has gotten for the Souper Bowl is flattering but much of it belongs to her coworkers.

“I’m very humbled to be spotlighted for coming up with this idea, but it is very much a group effort,” she said. “They’re the Hall of Famers. They’re the stars of the show. I’m just the person on the sidelines, making the plays.”

Stramat said several people already have approached her to say, “You have to keep this going,” and she is currently trying to come up with more ideas, such as something possibly based on the Olympic Games this summer.

And no matter which team comes out on top in the Souper Bowl, for her, the best part of it all is being able to help local families.

“The big winner is the families we serve,” she said. “We’ll be able to help them out. This is something we could do for them.”

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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