

This Holiday Season, Vista Gives Back

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From creating care baskets for Folsom seniors to beginning its first local hygiene drive—alongside continuing previous traditions—Vista has officially held its season of giving spanning the second and third weeks of November.

One of the school's most recognized traditions is its very own Spirit of Vista Giving drive. Managed by the student government, this drive has two parts: the annual food drive and the delivery of senior care baskets. The canned food drive is one that several schools district-wide have participated in, with proceeds going to the Twin Lakes Food Bank which supports countless families in need in Folsom and Rancho-Cordova.

"We started this drive because we wanted to make an impact for our community and help anyone in need," said Brynn Seale, vice president of Vista's class of 2024. Seale has been involved in this drive for most of her time at Vista and believes that the economic struggles faced by certain groups were "an important thing to address."

To provide an incentive for donations, Vista allows donors to vote for turkey ambassadors, or teachers representing certain clubs. The teacher with the most cans to his or her name will dress up in the "infamous" turkey costume, as last year's victor Mr. Schwan did.

The other part of this drive is carried out by all advisory classes. Each student is assigned to bring certain items such as candles or woolen socks which are then compiled into a "care basket." Student government then distributes these baskets to senior citizens in nearby care centers and communities. This "brightens the holidays" for several citizens, something that Vista strives to continue.

However, unlike these previous drives, Vista's hygiene drive isn't an old tradition, but rather a new initiative. It was facilitated by sophomore Ahana Raghavan, Vista's Red Cross club.

"The drive collects basic hygiene products as well as sanitary products such as pads and tampons, which will be going to the El Dorado food bank...The bank's 30 different distributor sites, spanning hundreds of women in need will be impacted," explained Raghavan.

When asked why she started this drive, Raghavan said, "...period poverty is a big issue, especially in California... 1 in 4 girls in California miss school because they don't have adequate period supplies...I think taking action on it right now is the best way to address it."

She later explained that women's rights and feminism were important to her, and this drive would be a way to "clear misconceptions about them [these issues] and push our community forward." The drive is in collaboration with Raghavan's own business, Woolf's Torn Pages. The business works to raise awareness of gender equity and period poverty, selling products such as tote bags with empowering messages. It also raises money via drives to combat these issues.

The club aimed to have "550 pads or tampons collected, or 55 packages being made," a goal that they doubled with over 100 packages made.

Vista's impact on the community doesn't end here. Alongside the can and hygiene product drives, volunteers gather in front of the school collecting favors and stocking stuffers to donate. These items range from small toys to larger gifts, all to spread holiday cheer to foster children.

"I think it [the drive] was originally started because we wanted to make an impact that was related to the holidays... There are a lot of foster kids in our area so we thought it would be cool to do something for them," said Beth Nebiyu, a senior and member of Vista's National Honors Society.

While there were not any specific numerical goals, the group had collected over fifty favors as of last week, and is "more than proud" of their impact, as said by Nebiyu.

Although there are many more festivities to come this holiday season, Vista has shown its priorities with these drives. Everyone made a change and contributed towards a better future with such opportunities, and these clubs helped Vista students to donate as much as possible and these monumental impacts will continue throughout the years.