2012 Seattle Basket Brigade

2012 Seattle Basket Brigade → 185 baskets feeding 750 people

Basket Brigade leaders – Bryan Tokarczyk, Les Berenson MD, Rama Erasmus, Dave Rider

185 turkeys

2012 Basket Brigade volunteer stories

I recently completed my first experience volunteering with the Seattle Basket Brigade. I met some wonderful people doing good things in the community. The day was filled with carefully coordinated efforts to get volunteers registered and signed up for preferred tasks. **Baskets were assembled, volunteers fed with delicious fare donated by local eateries and deliveries completed that same afternoon**. I doubled efforts with another wonderful volunteer to deliver baskets to families homes. It was certainly the highlight of the day to be welcomed with smiles & gratitude by the recipients.
Liz R.

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This was my first time helping at the Seattle Basket Brigade. I had a chance to pick up an incredibly generous bread donation from a bakery. **I was astounded by the generosity of the bakery, and I realized that there is a lot of food out there, and it made me think about how I might contribute to people on an ongoing basis by participating in moving the extra food from businesses to the people who need it**.
It was so much fun to make up the boxes and to spend time with so many people so eager to contribute to others. It was a wonderful experience and I feel like I may have made some connections with like minded people who may end up being life long friends.
It was also nice to see the smile on the woman's face when I delivered the box of food and the turkey to her and her two year old daughter. She was very grateful.
Kathleen K.

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This was my first year working with Seattle Basket Brigade and it was a wonderful experience. **I especially like that this is such a grassroots effort of neighbor helping neighbor.** The other people who volunteered were excellent to spend time with, everyone sharing the same values and mission. When I delivered my basket to the home of my recipient, I was humbled by their modest surroundings and it was obvious that they could benefit from assistance - despite living in a fancy neighborhood you would never think that about.
It shows that all judgment and preconceptions are completely worthless to carry around when you're talking about hungry families. **A hungry mom and child deserves support no matter where they live, and we are all here to help one another.**
Sherry D. (Leader of - Creating a Better World - Center for Spiritual Living)

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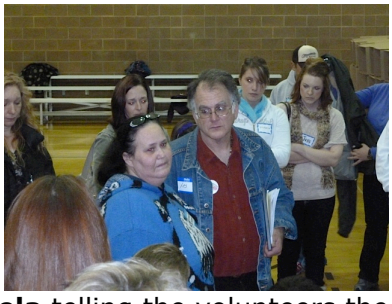
From a volunteer whose family has been a recipient each year

This year we got the opportunity to volunteer with the Basket Brigade, it was such a full filling experiance to volunteer and know we were helping so many people in need, as being one of the many families that have been helped in the past many years. It was even a more gratifying experience to us this year to be able to help build the baskets because it helps so many that probably wouldn't have any food if not for these baskets, due to life being turned upside down. We never know what can or will happen to us, nor when, and in a instant we may be in need. It is very important to have this help, and our large family is very grateful for all that has been done year after year, and thanks again for allowing us to volunteer and to help out.
Micaela S



Micaela telling the volunteers the impact of her family receiving a basket each year

Sherry

This was my first year working with the Basket Brigade. I had done food collection growing up and in high school, was given the opportunity to deliver to one family at Thanksgiving.
I had no clue what to expect at Basket Brigade but to go in with an open mind to take the task that was given to me. When I arrived, it was total organization. I was assigned a task immediately. Went in the gym and got to work.
I ended up getting in the delivery line 3 times and picked up 5 baskets to deliver. Three of the families were home and was able to meet them. One was surprised because of the communication within their family. All of them were very grateful.
To me, this wasn't about dropping the food off and getting on my merry way.
I was not on a time clock. This was time to give for the families.
Whenever I could, I took time to talk to family members. Make them feel special.
I met a father and found out that I had a couple commonalities with him. I met a neighbor of a family who was very accommodating to help store the food. A grandmother who didn't know the food was coming, but the grandkids did and all were excited. And I met a proud father of his two little girls. They were excited to see me and happy to get to talk to me. All in all, the families that I talked to were very appreciative at the generosity. **Would I do this again? YES!**
Kathy D

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I will mention one conversation I had with another volunteer who found the brigades this year and last to be overflowing with a varied population of enthusiastic and industrious workers; a situation that he has not experienced to such an extent at other volunteer events. This event will grow. I look forward to working on this and to develop the teen event.
Eileen L

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Essentially this was a lovely event which I wouldn't hesitate to do again next year. At first it seemed chaotic logistically because I wasn't clear about what my role would be but that quickly passed as you gave me my driving mission and I just jumped into following the sundry tasks at hand. **What I found was that the energy of everyone was superbly self-directed from previous years and one simply did things intuitively and with remarkable enthusiasm--especially the kids**. **Still it was obvious that much forethought had gone into all this and I congratulate you and the various leaders who were there to resolve glitches.**
Both families that received our baskets seemed gracious and appreciative, they smiled and that was sufficient. Their Thanksgiving just had gotten better, as had mine.
Thanks for the volunteer party.
Namaste,
Eddie G

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CERTIFICATE OF
Appreciation & Philanthropy

Mohammad Arfan Bhatti and Taste of India
for donating your incredible Indian food
for our volunteers to our Seattle Basket Brigade

Your gift meant our resources could help provide
enough food to feed over 185 families & 750 needy individuals.

Many, many thanks
Les Berenson, MD
Coordinator, Seattle Basket Brigade

November 17, 2012

The certificate we frame and give to each of our wonderful donors who contribute unselfishly and help bring our Seattle Basket Brigade to completion

Seattle Basket Brigade's meaning to teens and kids

What was significant was how normal it was for my daughter. She didn't question going to a couple of strangers' houses and giving them turkeys. (She has often suggested bringing a homeless person home.) I think the feeling of kinship is something we come into the world with, and I've tried to protect that, never teaching her that the world is full of "strangers." She wanted to make sure the turkeys got properly delivered. And when we were invited into one family's home and spent half an hour chatting, and the little boy asked her to go see his room. I chatted with the mother, recently moved from India. We talked about what Thanksgiving means (until then, she'd been told: eating) and discovered that it converges with a thanksgiving/harvest celebration in Feb/March in India. When we wished each other Happy Thanksgiving upon parting, it was with appreciation for the deeper meaning behind our words, which crossed national boundaries. I think the value of bringing children as a part of the Brigade is to continue to reinforce the fact that we're one big family, or
as I said preserve that sense that they came with.
So I deeply appreciate the Basket Brigade for that reason. Thanks again.
Karin DW

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We all know that through the eyes of a child there is so much innocence, love and unconditional kindness, however it was especially neat to witness a showering of self-driven abundance as they participated in Seattle's 2012 Annual Basket Brigade. My 6 1/2 year old son and his 10 year old cousin felt a wonderful sense of self gratification & warmth by personally assisting with the assembly of the baskets, knowing full well that what they are doing is of great importance to those that need support. They both felt confident and refreshed from the filling up of the baskets down to the very delivery of the gifts themselves. Overall the experience for the little ones was quite exhilarating and infused with pure goodness in all aspects. We look forward to next years Basket Brigade! ~With Warmth & Gratitude,
Tera M

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This is my 7th year coordinating the Seattle Basket brigade.
Seeing hundreds of volunteers , so many amazing Seattle businesses, restaurants, bakeries etc. coming together to provide food to those less fortunate. Watching volunteers (often for the 1st time), kids and teens learning about serving others, and everyone rallying around any obstacles for the greater good. We almost had to cancel the effort and then magically it came back to life, started by a huge donation from the Center of Spiritual Living and others.
Micaela, a recipient I've been delivering baskets to for 4-5 years, not only came back to volunteer and help others, but spoke from her heart to the volunteers what it means to be in need and to be able to receive such a wonderful gift – food - something we often take for granted.
What a wonderful ThanksLiving event – 185 baskets feeding approximately 750 people.
Les Berenson MD – coordinator of the Seattle Basket Brigade