

“Meals of Hope” Food Packing Project

Perry Valley Grange and the Greenwood FFA co-sponsored a “Meals of Hope” food packing project on Friday, February 5, 2016, designed to fight hunger in the area by providing nutritious meal kits for the Perry County and Juniata County Food Banks. Planning for this big undertaking began several months prior to this when Grange and FFA members sat down together to plan a strategy to generate significant support – *both financial and volunteers* – from the community. Could this small rural community possibly muster enough interest to raise the \$12,000 that was needed to underwrite the cost of packing up to 50,000 meal kits?

The Grange, anxious to continue its service to the community even though its identity was no longer attached to the former Grange Hall, offered to contribute up to \$6,000 in a dollar-for-dollar match for other contributions received. An application for release of a portion of the Grange Hall sale proceeds was submitted and approved by the PA State Grange to provide these funds. The FFA members did the brunt of the work to contact local churches, Granges and other civic groups with an appeal to support the project. Local newspapers sent reporters to interview the planners with the result being some great advance publicity.

The results were beyond expectations and will be further explained in the captions under the pictures taken at the event.



An estimated 180 persons came out on Feb. 5th to help pack the meal kits. How wonderful to see young and old working and laughing together in such a good cause – feeding the hungry.



Huge bags of rice and macaroni, supplemented with flavorings and nutrients, were among the ingredients that by the end of the evening would be assembled into 46,000 individual meal kits.

Total receipts were \$17,450, contributed by fifty-one individuals and organizations and including the proceeds of several fund raising events. After purchasing all the needed supplies, there was still \$5,000 remaining that was given to the Food Banks to underwrite their on-going costs of operation.



At the mid-way point of the packing operation, a light supper was provided to all helpers thanks to the efforts of these Grange volunteers.



When kits were completed, another group of volunteers used a template to make sure that the correct number was packed into each case.



Multiple assembly lines were set up in the Greenwood Elementary School gym. Everyone was assigned one task in the assembly of each meal kit and it was amazing how quickly each was done.



Each time another thousand kits were completed, the gong sounded and applause erupted.

