

## Youth takes “Challenge” for Community Food Pantry

For the past 11 years, East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry, Inc. has participated in a nationwide food drive initiative known as the Feinstein Challenge. Philanthropist Alan Feinstein donates funds to participating hunger fighting agencies based on the number of food items and financial donations collected during the months of March & April. This year’s Feinstein Challenge resulted in donations of 47,732 non-perishable food items and \$62,848.11 in monetary contributions to East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry, Inc.

The success of this year’s challenge was due to the overwhelming support from our community, in particular the youth. Young people from all around Fort Bend County got involved by holding food drives and collecting money for the Food Pantry at East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry.



Alan with his alligator bank.

One donation came from a six-year old boy named Alan who emptied his alligator bank because he wanted to help the Food Pantry. His mother, Kathy, said, “Alan woke up one day before school and asked me for a zip lock bag. He came back and gave me the bag full of money. I asked him where the money came from, and he told me that he had emptied his alligator bank and wanted to give all of his money to the poor people.” When his mother asked Alan why he wanted to give his money to those in need, he told her it was because he wanted others to have the same things he has.

The students of the Stafford Municipal School District made the Challenge a district-wide event. The seniors of the Stafford High School Band and the FCCLA group organized a penny drive (Pennies for a Positive Change) to show that even the smallest amount of money can make a difference in someone’s life. The project involved all of the schools within the district and they collected an amazing \$1,268.73 in pennies which was donated to the Ministry. The Stafford High School youth were honored at this year’s “Youth in Philanthropy” luncheon for their innovative fundraising project and \$1,000 donation was awarded to East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry on their behalf.



Stafford High School Y.I.P. Students



Houston Juniors 14 National Volleyball Team

Perhaps the most touching donation to the Food Pantry came from a group of young girls wishing to honor the memory of someone special to them. The Houston Juniors 14 National Volleyball team held a food drive to honor Jan Schiff, a beloved member of the community whose life had a positive impact on many. Volleyball team member and Sugar Land resident, Elizabeth Vass, organized the food drive and said, “Mrs. Schiff was a very dedicated person who loved to help people from all backgrounds. The volleyball team wanted to honor her and follow in her footsteps by collecting food items to donate to East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry. I think if Mrs. Schiff were here with us she would be very happy to see the many people we have helped.”

Other youth organizations helping out in this year's Feinstein Challenge were Austin High School National Honor Society, Settlers Way Elementary School Student Council, Girl Scout Troop 63034, Dulles High School National Honor Society and Senior Girl Scout Troop 557.

"It is incredibly heartwarming to witness the care and compassion demonstrated by so many in our community," said Vickie Coates, EFBHNM Executive Director. "As we face uncertain economic times it's comforting to know that the people of Fort Bend County will be there to help one another. The support we have received from the community has been huge. We have been able to stock the Food Pantry shelves which will help during the summer months."

The Feinstein Challenge was established in 1997 by the Feinstein Foundation as a nation-wide effort focusing on the alleviation of hunger and to increase the awareness of the hunger problem throughout the country. Every day in Fort Bend County 2,782 individuals are dealing with "food insecurity"- which means they don't know when they will get their next meal.

Since 1990, East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry, Inc. has been a constant source of support to our community, helping individuals and families within Fort Bend County with the basic necessities of life. The Ministry's programs help over 3,000 individuals a month by providing food, financial assistance for rent and utilities, school supplies, immunizations and other needed services. Last year, the Food Pantry assisted 36,702 individuals, which included 14,967 children. For more information about East Fort Bend Human Needs Ministry, Inc. call 281-261-1006, stop by their offices at 425 Stafford Run in Stafford, or visit [www.HumanNeeds.org](http://www.HumanNeeds.org).