Canned Vegetables Never Tasted So Good - Boeing Employees Give To Area Food Banks

At a Boeing parking lot in Renton, Wash., a giant food can holds a surprise for western Washington food banks: smaller cans - 156 of them. But instead of canned beans or peas, each contains a $1,000 check, and there's one for every food bank from Yelm to the Canadian border.

Representatives from 156 food banks have been invited to bring their can openers to Renton on Saturday, May 2, at 8:00 a.m., to pick up their checks. Altogether, Boeing employees are awarding a total of $156,000 in grants to help food banks stock up for the summer, a time when supplies run critically low.

"Traditionally there's plenty of attention on hunger in the winter," said Karen Vallejos, president of the board of the Employees Community Fund, formerly known as the Boeing Employees Good Neighbor Fund. "But the shelves start to look bare in the summer and the need is year round. It's the right time to help," she said.

During a one-hour event, the Employees Community Fund will award cans of "grand greens" to every food bank identified so far.

"If we've missed anyone, I hope they'll let us know," said Vallejos.

To receive a grant from the Employees Community Fund, a food bank must be an IRS-designated 501(c)3 nonprofit that opens its doors to the general public in an area where Boeing people live. That area stretches across 10 counties in western Washington.

"Food banks are a very grassroots way for people to help," said Vallejos. "Many are mom-and-pop operations. We appreciate the way they feed the hungry, while treating everyone with respect," she said.

The Employees Community Fund is a nonprofit charitable organization managed by Boeing employees. Last year, Boeing employees contributed $20 million to help their communities throughout western Washington, and raised more than $30 million nationwide. This year's goal is $35 million.

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