

## News release



**Everett Public Schools**

**Nov. 5, 2012**

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### **Jackson High School students win award for creating community food bank**

***Student-inspired project forged public and private partnership efforts to create much needed community food bank service***

On Nov. 29, student and staff representatives of Jackson High School and Mill Creek volunteers will be honored at the 27th Annual Partnership Forum hosted by the county's Human Services Council. They earned the 2012 Partnership Forum's Youth Award because they brought together public agencies and private businesses to create a food bank for citizens of Mill Creek.

The food bank was born in response to awareness of a growing need in the Mill Creek area. Although the perception of the city and its environs may be one of wealth and prosperity, the facts, as presented during the first planning meeting in January were daunting. Mill Creek city representatives, members of the Mill Creek Business Association and Mill Creek Rotary members learned about food programs the high school was coordinating for its students. Most were surprised at the dramatic increase in the number of JHS students who relied on the school's free or reduced meal program. All spoke of the impact the economic downturn was having on friends and acquaintances. From that initial meeting and conversation, commitment and a plan were born.

(more)



*JHS students and adult volunteers ready food items for the grand opening in April – the city of Mill Creek's first food bank. Food is available every Thursday evening from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. through a unique partnership born at the school and joined by the city, Rotary, businesses, Volunteers of America and community volunteers.*

By April 9, volunteers cut the ribbon on the first food bank distribution night. Since that ribbon cutting less than a year ago, the food bank has been open every Thursday evening from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.



*During the food bank's grand opening in April, Mill Creek Mayor Mike Todd thanks volunteers and organizations for making it possible for the city to help meet needs of its citizens.*

at Jackson High School. Even during the summer, when classes were dismissed, volunteers opened the food bank for those relying upon its services.

In September, the food bank moved to a portable classroom on the Heatherwood Middle School site, where it will remain at least until August 2013. Last month, the food bank officially became a satellite of the Volunteers of America network of food banks. That connection adds to and strengthens the partnership linking volunteers, Mill Creek Rotary, schools, the school district, the

business association, Boeing Employee Credit Union and others into a common purpose.

Upon learning of the award, JHS Activities Director Judi Montgomery said, "This is wonderful recognition for a true collaborative effort. I hope that it is only the beginning of projects that involve multiple agencies. Everett School District should be pleased that they are leading the way in this effort of business, city government, and education working hand in hand for the benefit of our community. In my opinion it is the way it should be."

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