

Digest?

This is a mini print version of our regular news. For a free e-news subscription and more news, visit thecalltwo.holston.org.

The Call

Digest

Back page

Pineapple rescue! Church members salvage fresh fruit from a Knoxville business.

May 20, 2013

www.holston.org

Teenager uses cooking skills to fight malaria

CHILHOWIE, Va. -- Avery Smith, age 14, appreciates good food. He also appreciates how his church is saving lives by fighting malaria.

So when Smith and his pastor put their heads together to create an "Imagine No Malaria" fundraiser, it didn't take long for them to come up with ... pizza!

"It's kind of the mad scientist in me. I like to experiment," Smith said.

A straight-A student, trombone player, and fan of TV's Food Network, Smith also became an advocate when his pastor, the Rev. Sarah Slack, told him about Imagine No Malaria.

"Avery is my one kid who comes to youth, so I try to work with his interests," said Slack, pastor at Chilhowie United Methodist Church.

Slack told Smith about the United Methodist Church's mission to eradicate malaria by the end of 2015. She explained that Chilhowie UMC is one of 890-plus churches in the Holston Conference, which is raising \$1 million to save children in Africa from dying of the mosquito-borne disease.

"Malaria claims a life every minute, which is horrible," the teenager said. "I wasn't aware of how bad malaria is, didn't know it was that great of a problem."

Slack's congregation already had a goal of giving \$60 per family to the campaign, but her dedicated youth member wanted to do something more.

"We decided to make and sell take-and-bake pizzas, because after all, everybody likes pizza," he said.

The food aficionado researched until he found the perfect homemade crust recipe. Then he and his pastor created four different kinds of pizza toppings. One was a dessert pizza labeled the "Chilhowie Special" because it included a special ingredient: apple butter made by the church's United Methodist Men.

Smith then wrote a speech to give to his congregation "with a timer that went off every 60 seconds," Slack said. The timer indicated that every 60 seconds, another person dies from malaria.

Both the teenager's pastor and mother admitted they cried during the Sunday morning presentation.

"My daddy would have been so proud," said Melanie Smith, whose father, the Rev. Arthur Phillips Jr., was a pastor in the North Carolina Conference. (Her grandfather, the Rev. Arthur



Avery Smith, age 14, created a take-and-bake pizza to raise money for "Imagine No Malaria."

Phillips Sr., was a pastor in the Holston Conference.)

On the designated pizza-making Saturday, Smith was joined by pastor, mother, and fellow church member Lauren Rhea in the church kitchen. They rolled dough all day, and Chef Smith added his own blend of spices and cheeses to the finished products.

"There was flour everywhere," says Pastor Slack. "We were sliding around in it."

The project turned out well, not only because it was tasty -- "Best homemade pizza I've ever had, and I've tried to make homemade pizza," said Slack -- but also because it was a bargain.

"The Imagine No Malaria campaign says it takes \$10 to save a life," Smith said. "We organized our whole pizza fundraiser so that each pizza costs \$10. Therefore, you buy a pizza, you save a life. It's a real deal."

When the last pizza was sold, Smith had helped save 48 lives, raising \$480 for Imagine No Malaria. So far, Chilhowie United Methodist Church has raised an additional \$3,140 -- saving 314 more lives. ■

Write a check to your local church with "Imagine No Malaria #684" on the memo line, or give online at ImagineNoMalaria.org.

Volunteers salvage fresh fruit for the hungry

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. -- The bouquets at Edible Arrangements are not made of flowers, but fruit. For every pricey, pretty arrangement the company creates and delivers, some fruit gets wasted.

"We have the most waste with pineapple," says employee Brian Paul. "It's the way our machine works. We cut the pineapples into hearts and daisies."

However, thanks to a rescue operation organized by Society of St. Andrew, pineapple, honeydew, cantaloupe, and strawberries that would otherwise go into the trash are now salvaged to feed inner-city children and the homeless.

"It's a shame to waste it. Who doesn't want pineapple?" says Mike Smith, a member at Concord United Methodist Church in Knoxville. "So many people don't get fresh fruit."

Every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, volunteers from Concord church go to the west Knoxville business to collect buckets of fresh fruit – about 85 pounds each trip, says Smith. The fruit is delivered to different organizations including Knox Area Rescue Ministries, Volunteer Ministry Center, Love Kitchen, Salvation Army, Positively Living, and Water Angels Ministry.

"It only takes about 1 ½ hours of our time to get 85 pounds of absolutely fantastic pineapple to give to kids in need," said Smith, on a day when he delivered fruit to 53 children in the after-school program at Wesley House Community Center.

"We like to help the community as much as we can," said Paul of Edible Arrangements. "We hate to throw it out."

Smith enlists five additional volunteers from his own church to go on twice-weekly rescue missions at Edible Arrangements, two volunteers at a time.

A retired trucking company administrator, Smith became acquainted with the Society of St. Andrew during his recent stint as president of the Holston Conference United Methodist Men. He's known for organizing massive gleaning projects for the Society of St. Andrew, the 34-year-old organiza-

tion that exists to rescue food for the hungry.

"I got these facts [from the Food Research and Action Center] last week," Smith says. "Knoxville is the 26th hungriest metro area in the U.S. The state of Tennessee is the sixth hungriest state in the nation."

In March, Smith helped the Society of St. Andrew save 38,500 pounds of sweet potatoes from going into a landfill because they weren't high-quality enough to sell commercially. Instead, the sweet potatoes were transported from a farm in Fayetteville, Tenn., dumped on the Concord church parking lot, bagged by volunteers, and distributed to 22 food pantries in 11 counties.

Smith has organized similar distributions with food gleaned from farms and businesses, involving volunteers from different denominations to move cabbage, green beans, watermelon, tomatoes and even yogurt to area pantries and soup kitchens.

Since the Concord volunteers started collecting fruit from Edible Arrangements in December 2012, they've distributed almost 2,000 pounds of fruit, about 400 pounds per month, according to Linda Tozer, Society of St. Andrew project coordinator.

"You can tell it's good, because they eat it right up," said Tony Vega, recently

accepting buckets of fresh pineapple from Concord volunteers. Vega is a cook at Knox Area Rescue Ministries, serving 900 meals to the homeless every day.

Pam Arnett, a Concord member and frequent fruit-rescuer, tells how the children at Wesley House responded when bright yellow rings of pineapple recently appeared as an after-school snack.

"The kids preferred pineapple over cookies," said Arnett, a registered nurse. "That's something people need to know." ■

Find out more about Society of St. Andrew at www.endhunger.org or call Linda Tozer at (615) 878-9233.



Pam Arnett and Mike Smith rescue pineapple from a local business, then deliver to an after-school program.