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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **DISTRICT'S SCHOOLS RALLY TO PROVIDE FOOD FOR COUNTY'S NEEDY FAMILIES**

WINNEMUCCA, Nev.— On Friday, December 16, students at French Ford Middle School gathered in the school's library for a real-life lesson in community service.

Within minutes, students were hauling cart after cart of sorted food boxes to a waiting truck, where they would then be transported to the Winnemucca Events Complex Exhibit Hall for use in the Winnemucca Ministerial Association's annual Christmas Food Basket project.

“It was amazing,” said Lowry High School sophomore student Dain Maher, who oversaw a community food drive on behalf of the association as part of his Eagle Scout project.

“They just kept coming with box after box of food,” said Maher. “When we went to weigh it, we couldn't believe how much it was. We actually had to make two truck loads.”

In all, French Ford Middle School gathered 3,570 pounds of food in just three weeks.

Other schools were impressive in their efforts as well.

Lowry High School's student body gathered 2,550 pounds of food—so many donations that Maher joked he cringed every time he had to pick up more food from classrooms as the head of the Leadership Class's food drive project.

“I just knew who was going to have to haul it all to the fairgrounds,” he joked. “But seriously, we were really grateful. Everybody really came through in a big way.”

The Winnemucca Junior High School sponsored their food drive around Thanksgiving and food drive organizers were certainly grateful for the school's 1,500 pounds that students there contributed.

Even Winnemucca's youngest residents got in on the good works. Grass Valley Elementary School weighed in at 1,190 pounds; Sonoma Heights Elementary School donated 1,180 pounds of food; and Winnemucca Grammar School brought in 1,090 pounds of food.

Students weren't done, though. The food then needed to be sorted and distributed to nearly 300 boxes that would constitute Christmas dinner for this area's needy families.

On Wednesday and Thursday, December 21-22, more than 150 people—including many Humboldt County School District students and employees—gathered at the Exhibit Hall to help organize approximately 20,000 pounds of food (well over 11,000 pounds from the Winnemucca schools alone).

It was no easy task, said Maher, who noted that over the course of two days, volunteers did everything from haul donations, sort and mini-sort food, tape boxes, fill boxes, make innumerable trips to the Food Bank, gather frozen turkeys and chickens, assemble and transport the Christmas food boxes, clean up the Exhibit Hall and haul everything back to the Food Bank or the United Methodist Church, which headquarters the Winnemucca Soup Kitchen.

“It was an incredible effort,” said Barbara Sealy, who oversees the Winnemucca Food Bank with Zerella Buttars. “We have enough food left over to hopefully see us through the after-Christmas winter months.”

She added, “We really felt blessed to be able to have so much help and so many donations. Our community really came out in force to help.”

For his part, Maher said his Eagle Scout project was a lot of work but offered a lot of satisfaction as well.

“I just thought it was really cool how everybody came together for those in need,” said Maher. “I was really appreciative of everyone who helped, both by donating food and then by helping us get that food to the needy families.”

Maher added, “Our community is awesome.”