

Working to change the world

Seckman High athletes know the importance of helping others

By Reese Wingbermuehle
Seckman High

Collecting cans for the food pantry, sandbagging in Kimmswick and participating in the Special Needs Soccer Association are just a few ways Seckman High School athletes have volunteered to help the community over the past few years. Being part of the athletic program at Seckman High isn't just about competing in different sports. The coaches also teach the athletes valuable life lessons, like the pride a person feels when he or she is able to help another, sometimes less fortunate, person.

Volunteering in the community brings players closer as a team and allows the students to see the value in helping others.

Members of the Letterman's Club go trick-or-treating for canned goods each Halloween, which helps provide food for local families during the holiday season. The cheerleading team collects canned goods during the summer, when supplies are low at the food pantries.

The athletes, who are competitive by nature, challenge each other to see who can bring in the most food. This helps the



Seckman Soccer photo

Members of the Seckman girls soccer team volunteer with the Special Needs Soccer Association.

community and makes volunteering fun for the student athletes.

Sandbagging doesn't sound like a fun chore, but during the last flood in Kimmswick, the Seckman wrestling team arrived in Kimmswick ready to help whomever

they could. They spent several hours filling sandbags and stacking them to make a wall to help save the houses and shops in Kimmswick.

While the sandbagging helped Kimmswick residents and business

owners, the athletes also benefitted. They got to work side-by-side with the community, making new friendships and gaining a respect for preserving a part of Missouri's history.

The girls' soccer team spends a few weekends a year with the Special Needs Soccer Association (SPENSA) helping teach soccer skills to athletes with special needs. The bond Seckman students build with the SPENSA athletes is so special that some of them have decided to major in special education in college.

Every sport at Seckman High hosts a benefit game each year to help raise funds to cover the cost of medical bills for several local families affected by cancer.

Groups outside of athletics, such as Student Council, DECA, Honor Society, and SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions), just to name a few, also know the importance of volunteering and are quick to help others.

Being a student at Seckman High School is more than just learning the skills needed to do well on the ACT college entrance exam. Seckman also teaches the importance of having good character and being involved in the community.

Many teens throughout area make community service a priority

By Alexis Lowery
St. Pius X High

Teenagers are busy. Between school, sports, and part-time jobs, there is not much time left for anything else. So, we have to prioritize the things that matter to us, and many of us put community service on the list.

I, for one, am passionate about helping victims of domestic violence. There is a shelter called A Safe Place that provides housing and therapy for women and children after leaving an abusive relationship. A Safe Place has joined with a charitable project my family started – Mary's House of Hope – for the same purpose, to help people escape violent relationships. As a volunteer with those projects, I have been able to see what encouragement and belief in people can really do. The evolution of the women living in the shelter is remarkable. I am grateful to have the opportunity to work with the organization and be a part of a strong sisterhood.

A fellow senior at St. Pius, Alicia



Helping others isn't a punishment; it's a joy

Carron, has enjoyed working with a charity called rEcess. One Friday a month the group turns the Our Lady Catholic Church basement into a play place for children with disabilities, as well as their siblings. For three hours each month, the children get to play games, watch movies and have fun with high schoolers.

Herculaneum junior Caitlyn Huber is a member of her school's National Honor Society, and one of the group's main values is service. She said the purpose for having a garage sale was to raise aware-

ness about cancer and to raise funds to help find a cure. The National Honor Society also provided childcare during the holiday season so parents could shop for gifts. The school also helps run the "Blackcat Closet," which is similar to Goodwill and provides students in need with clothing and other items.

Caitlyn Huber said her membership and service through National Honor Society have contributed to her character.

"Since being a part of NHS, I have been able to be an active member in not only my school community but the Herculaneum community as well," Huber said. "This, I find, is helping me become a hardworking and dependable person whom others can trust."

St. Pius X National Honor Society students are required to complete tutoring hours. On days when students have late starts, some NHS members spend some of that extra time tutoring other students who might be struggling in a subject. They try to mentor and encourage their fellow students to achieve academic excellence.

Another way St. Pius NHS members help is by working with other groups that assist people in need, such as organizations for the homeless, domestic violence victims and children with disabilities. These groups encourage students to come and work with their organizations, and many students have taken advantage of the offer and supported those charities.

Multiple schools in Jefferson County host blood drives, and many students volunteer to work at those drives. Joe Bradley, a senior at De Soto High School, said he gives blood as often as he can.

Students who want to do more to help out in their communities may reach out to local nonprofit groups. Websites such as volunteermatch.org can also be a resource.

St. Pius senior Kelsey Cheaney said it is important teenagers know they are welcome to volunteer.

"No matter how old or young you are, it is empowering to know you have the chance to make an impact on others," she said.

Leader Teen Advisory Board members

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Alexis Lowery St. Pius X Haley Worth Hillsboro Joseph Andrews Crystal City Caitlyn Huber Herculaneum Molly Gearhart Grandview Reese Wingbermuehle Seckman Audrey McKinney Festus Taylor Werges Eureka Hart Bohlen Northwest Sundus Malik Jefferson Joe Bradley De Soto