

Gaithersburg Mayor to Award Local Students For Delivering More than 1500 lbs Pounds of Food to Homeless People

*Local volunteer organization expanding to schools, food banks
throughout the county;
recycling resources while feeding the hungry*

Gaithersburg, Md.— Mayor Sidney Katz will award Gaithersburg Middle School students and organizers of the innovative Food Recovery for the Hungry (FRH) program on March 21 for their efforts to prevent good food from filling the Montgomery County landfill while also feeding local homeless people.

In one year, five students and their families collected and delivered 1,461 pounds of food to The Lord's Table, a Gaithersburg soup kitchen.

As part of school breakfasts, lunches, or after-school snack programs, every student must receive the same set of edibles, and once cafeteria workers hand out the items, the school cannot take them back, say county health regulations. So students who did not want everything on their trays previously just threw whole foods like milk, chocolate milk, strawberry milk, juice, fresh fruit and canned fruit into the trash.

This horrified FRH founder and executive director of the Youth Leadership Training Academy (YLTA) Afrin Homer.

“Why would you waste good food when so many people are hungry in Montgomery County?” she said. “Besides feeding hungry families, young leaders are empowered to take charge and exercise their leadership skills.”

FRH is the first such program allowed in a Maryland public school, beginning last March at Gaithersburg Middle School. The program is set to expand into four more local schools this fall.

Mayor Katz will award Michael Berry, Arvand Homer, Adini Parikh, Jeremy Rubin, Emily Samuels, and Gaithersburg Middle School for their contributions through FRH to educational excellence on Monday, March 21, at 7:30 p.m.

Homer hopes to see Food Recovery for the Hungry implemented in all county schools so that more food can find its way to needy local families. Participants sign up in their school office and earn volunteer hours required for graduation.

Food is the third largest waste stream in the United States after paper and yard waste. In 2008, 31 million tons of excess food, leftover food, and food scraps went into landfills or incinerators, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

“FRH is all about people coming together to make a difference,” Homer said. “It effectively addresses waste and hunger problems by utilizing the collective action, talents, and resources of the people of a community.”

To bring FRH to your school, contact Homer at info@theylta.com.

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