Pennies add up to needed food

Penny drives held at schools across the district will help feed Langley's hungry

[Troy Landreville](#) / Langley Advance
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Student-volunteers, left to right, Alanna Bennett, Darien MacKay, and Shannon Walker helped collect change for the Langley Food Bank during Langley Secondary's penny drive in recognition of World Food Drive. Joining them in the photo is Langley Food Bank volunteer George Funk. Photograph by: Troy Landreville

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High school students across Langley have proven it to be true: every penny counts.

Seven out of eight local secondary schools participated in the largest World Food Day event in the country, held at the Langley Events Centre in October.

In recognition of the day, the schools held penny drives benefiting Langley Food Bank.

The local World Food Day Canada was organized by the Food For Famine Society and its founder Maria Martini, who

worked full time to put it together.

She visited Langley Secondary on Friday to congratulate the students for raising $426 worth of pennies, all of which will be donated to the local food bank.

As part of World Food Day, volunteer coordinator Helen Lee recruited student volunteers/ ambassadors to run penny drives from October to Christmas.

"It was always about donating to the Langley Food Bank," Martini said.

Twice a week at LSS, students with a water-cooler bottle in tow visited classrooms and asked their peers to donate pennies for the cause.

Among them were Grade 10 students Shannon Walker, Alanna Bennett, and Darien MacKay.

MacKay said her fellow students' generosity took her by surprise.

"I was really happy with it, because I our school isn't involved all the time, so it was a good surprise that everyone was donating and helping," she said.

"It's nice to give to people in our community," Bennett added.

In 2011, the World Food Day event was held at LSS, which Lee assumed is why the penny drive did particularly well at that school this year.

"We had the conference in the school gymnasium, so a lot of the kids have heard about World Food Day," Lee said. "I would say they were probably inspired last year. That's why this year they were more willing to participate in the penny drive."

Martini said LSS has a special place in her heart, because it was the first school to host a World Food Day event.

"Our mandate is to inspire youth, and for them taking this on and having that success, it says that we were successful because it's all about inspiration," Martini said.

During the LEC World Food Day, A minimum of 1,500 people, the majority of whom were high school students, listened to speakers including Mark Moore, co-founder and CEO of MANA Nutrition, World Vision Canada executive vice president Michael Messenger, Hope International Development Agency international president David McKenzie, and Daniel German, president and founder of Breakfast Clubs of Canada.

The focal message of the day was making a difference in the world, Martini told the Advance during the event.

"We're asking them [participants] by way of being kind to your neighbour, volunteer in your community, be passionate. Find your passion by helping others, not only here in your community, but also around the world," she said.

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