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Peekskill Rotary Helps Needy Families For Holidays

by Art Cusano (email) 12/09/11

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Rotary members with Hillcrest Elementary School staff. From left: Yvette Bivanis, Speech Pathologist; Anthony Scala Tech/Student teacher; Emma Bell, Rotary exchange student and Cliff Heaton, President of Peekskill Rotary.

PEEKSKILL, N.Y. -- Fifty packages of food were donated to students at Hillcrest Elementary School Friday by members of the Peekskill Rotary Club and the Hope for Youth Foundation.

The packages are part of the Food Bank of Westchester's backpack program that serviced 1,714 children last year. For purposes of dignity, student and family identities will not be made public and administrators will distribute the packs.

According to the Food Bank, there was a 30 percent increase in household food requests from 2009 to 2010 and a 15 percent increase from last year. The organization distributed 17,737 pounds of food and provided 5,475,182 meals to hungry Westchester residents.

The backpack program provides enough food in each pack to feed a family of four to six for the weekend and consists of healthy, non-perishable foods. The program is one of several assisted by the Rotary Club of Peekskill, which is comprised of 82 community members who commit themselves to the four areas of service, which includes club, vocational, community and international areas.

"This is one the programs that we support and feel very strongly about," said Peekskill Rotary Club President Cliff Heaton. "Our members raise funds for a variety of needs in our community, but we believe that our money and our efforts are well spent with the program and we are pleased and proud to participate."

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The Hope for Youth Foundation is a fundraising organization that provides funding for a variety of inspirational youth, including developmentally impaired children and college scholarships for academically advanced, mission oriented students.

For more information on how to get involved with Rotary, go to www.peekskillrotary.com.

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