



Photo by Keith Rawlings

Keeping Warm with YIA

by Serena Cajigal

This winter, Youth in Action Kirkwood (YIA) helped raise around \$950 to buy coats, hats, mittens, gloves, and Christmas presents for Friends of Kids with Cancer. YIA has been working with Friends of Kids with Cancer for the past 15 years to help children with cancer. This year, Youth in Action organized numerous fundraising events to help keep the kids warm. These events included a pumpkin painting station at the Kirkwood Farmers' Market Pumpkin Patch, bake sales, and hot cocoa and cookies booths -- all to raise money for the cause. The pumpkin painting station was a great way for students from Cor Jesu Academy, Ursuline Academy, and Kirkwood High School to not only help the cause and make a difference but also have fun with kids. The pumpkin painting station was a success, and sold around 315 pumpkins. YIA's goal is to raise \$2,500 for Friends of Kids with Cancer, so this past November 20th, they held a hot cocoa and cookies booth at the Kirkwood Cornucopia. In addition, they held another hot cocoa and cookies booth at the Kirkwood Farmers' Market on December 4th. Be sure to visit YIA in future events!

Feeding the Hungry

by Amy Varghese

On January 30th, Youth in Action St. Louis and Kirk Care joined forces to host a canned food drive at Glendale Lutheran Church. The organizations together gathered over 6,000 canned food items and distributed them to 100 families in the Kirkwood area. Each family received 75 food items, a dozen oranges and apples, and a loaf of bread. Several cars were filled with canned foods to be delivered from Kirk Care, grocery stores, the YIA office, and other organizations to the church. On this rainy day, people from all over the community came together to transfer the food items in shopping carts from cars to the gym.



The organizations are very grateful to all of the people who contributed to the drive by donating their time to make the food drive possible and the success that it was. YIA and Kirk Care express their gratitude to the several high schools that organized fundraisers for this cause, including Cor Jesu Academy, Ursuline Academy, Webster Groves High School, and Kirkwood High School. These four high schools alone have so generously contributed to Youth in Action and its mission for over 15 years. Youth in Action has also been working for over 25 years with several non-profit food institutions such as Operation Food Search, H.E.R.O.E.S. Care, and Kirk Care. The mission of Kirk Care is to reduce hunger and poverty by feeding the hungry, providing personal care and emergency utility items, and various other services for families living throughout the community. Youth in Action deeply appreciates the amazing contributions of Kirk Care and the many other contributors to the cause. Every food item donated and every moment in which the individuals of the community come together to support such a cause demonstrates a new step towards making a difference throughout the community.



Service from the Heart

by Serena Cajigal

On April 21, 2021, Youth in Action's very own Amy Varghese won the Youth Humanitarian Award for her outstanding community service. Amy Varghese has been part of YIA since sixth grade, and has accumulated around 1,200 service hours over the years. She is now a senior at Cor Jesu Academy and not only is Amy the president of YIA, but she is also involved in a myriad of extra-curriculars at her school and is an excellent athlete. Of course, community service was a big factor in deciding Amy's winning of the award, but the main factor in the decision was Amy as an individual and her hard working and exceptional personality. During the winter of 2020, she helped wrap over 150 presents, despite it being exam week. She also helped operate 5 trivia nights, 5 Green Tree Festivals, and many, many more. According to Amy, her favorite service project was "Shop with a Cop." Today, she continues to demonstrate her exemplary character and determination while helping her community.



30 Years of Working with Youth

by Sean Cajigal

For the past 30 years, Keith Rawlings has been helping the St. Louis community and inspiring youth to serve. He is constantly giving back to the community through his Youth Advisory Council and Youth In Action groups. These groups have raised over \$250,000 to support the goals of the Make-A-Wish foundation and many others. With this collaboration, they have allowed children to access dietary and health necessities. They have also been able to package and deliver over 50,000 Christmas presents to St. Louis children.



Keith's outstanding work and accomplishments have encouraged the youth of St. Louis to volunteer and offer their help to serve their community, totaling over 650 kids and over 275,000 hours of service. During these unprecedented times of COVID-19, it has been a great challenge to help children. Despite these difficulties, he succeeded in assembling 500 bags packed with toys, coloring books, stress balls, and Crayons to entertain kids throughout quarantine.

Due to his love for his community, Keith has always given without any expectation for compensation in return. His hospitality for others has significantly impacted many people of the St. Louis area for the last 30 years, and his hard work continues to inspire many.

