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Emancipated foster youth get a heapin' serving of Thanksgiving in Irwindale

By Thomas Himes, Staff Writer
Posted: 11/24/2010 02:38:20 PM PST



Michael Williams of SCE dishes out the stuffing to Monica Schenker of Los Angeles as Irwindale community leaders serve food for the second year in a row to homeless youth at Pacific Clinics Transitional Age Youth HOPE Drop-In Center in Irwindale, Tuesday, Nov. 23, 2010. (Staff Photo By Eric Reed/SVCITY)

IRWINDALE - They might not have a home or family, but thanks to the generosity of some businesses and officials, 100 teens had Thanksgiving dinner.

The Pacific Transitional Age Youth Center hosted the dinner Tuesday for teens and young adults, many of whom were released from the foster care system without a family or support system, authorities said.

"They find themselves without any job skills and they often end up homeless," Pacific Clinics Spokeswoman Lindy Russell said.

Chris Sabo said his mother recently abandoned him, so he was grateful for the meal. The 19-year-old said he was referred to the center a few years ago after he was hospitalized with a psychiatric disorder.

"This is my second home... sometimes it feels like it's my only home," Sabo said.

Picasso's Cafe, Bakery and Catering in Irwindale volunteered to make 13 courses for the feast.

"Our executive chef spent all day preparing the meal," Picasso's Executive Vice President Marissa DeRosa said.

Southern California Edison cooked six 20-pound turkeys in state-of-the-art ovens designed to quickly cook food through energy efficient features, said Southern California Edison Manager Doug Campbell.

Campbell said he felt inclined to offer the company's help after he took a tour of the center earlier this year.

"It just made such an impression on me," Campbell said. "I didn't realize how much (the center) was doing to help."

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In addition to Edison, the Irwindale Chamber of Commerce, Irwindale Soroptomist Club and Assemblyman Ed Hernandez D-West Covina, pooled their resources to collect food for the dinner.

Hernandez joined officials from the other organizations in dishing out food at the buffet style feast.

"It's the right thing to do. It makes you feel good," Hernandez said.

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Photo Gallery

Irwindale Community Leaders Serve Food



Irwindale community leaders serve food for the second year in a row to homeless youth at Pacific Clinics Transitional Age Youth HOPE Drop-In Center in Irwindale, Tuesday, Nov. 23, 2010. (SGVN/Staff Photo by Eric Reed/SVCITY)

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