

Collection for New Opportunities food pantry cruises to success



LARRY DEVINE | TIMES HERALD

New Opportunities I-Smile Coordinator Amy Hunziker accepts a Cruise for a Cause food-pantry donation.

By **LARRY DEVINE**
l.devine@carrollspaper.com

Threatening weather may have frustrated the Cruise for a Cause parade plans; however, the collection drive for New Opportunities' food pantry still rolled into high gear Saturday.

Cruise for a Cause generated more than 1,200 pounds of food and household items plus more than \$6,100 in cash donations, which includes \$1,000 matching gifts each from New Way Ford, Kyle Bauer of KB Rentals, and Jane Cook of H&R Block.

"We definitely had a lot of food. When we took it out to the New Opportunities building, they couldn't believe how much we kept hauling out of the trailer," said Brian Brauckman, who welcomed New Opportunities to use his Facebook page to promote Cruise for a Cause. Brauckman a few weeks ago began using his Facebook page to spearhead Saturday cruise nights on Highway 30 in Carroll — a break from the coronavirus gloom. Brauckman has hosted a Friday Night Special car show in Carroll the last five years.

"We definitely put a pretty good supply inside that pantry, if not filled it up," Brauckman said of the Cruise for a Cause success.

Donations included boxed and canned foods, cleaning supplies and personal-hygiene items.

"I was very much impressed by (the food donations), and other people were giving \$20, \$40, \$50," Brauckman said.

He added, "Considering the weather, everything was ab-



Ten-year-old Leah Carstens carries a bag of donations delivered at Cruise for a Cause for the New Opportunities food pantry.

solutely great. I was really impressed with how much people donated — food and money."

New Opportunities Family Development Center Co-

ordinator RoAnn Kofron said the donations couldn't have come at a better time, as the food pantry is serving

CRUISE

FROM PAGE 1

many more households due to the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic.

"We serve a regular number of low-income families here in Carroll County, but it has definitely increased. We've almost doubled the number of households we're serving because of the COVID," Kofron said. "People are out of work or are coming to see us for other reasons. A lot of different needs have arisen because of the COVID."

Kofron, who was on hand Saturday night to help with the collections, said of the turnout, "I was highly impressed with how people stepped up. We were in great need of food, and we can now offer a nice selection to our families. There's a range of all different households coming to see us for help. It was perfect timing for us. That was huge."

Brauckman, a Carroll native who's yard manager at Quandt Auto Salvage, said of his willingness to help Cruise for a Cause, "The main reason is I had some tough times when I was a kid. I grew up around other people who struggled, we had our own struggles when I was young, and now I'm very happy and content with my life. Things are good, so I'm more than happy to turn around and help somebody behind me. All it takes is a little bit of my time, and I just hate to see any kid go to bed hungry. That's just something that bothers me, so I said, 'Hell, yeah, I can definitely help out with that.'"

The parade planned for last Saturday was postponed to this Saturday; however, the event may be moved up to Friday if the weather forecast looks better for that night.

Participants will begin gathering their vehicles at 6:30 p.m. in the parking lot at Merchants Park and Carroll Athletic Field stadiums. Beginning at 7, the parade will travel east to High Ridge Road, north to 18th Street, east to New Hope and circle the campus there, west to Grant Road, north to 30th Street, west to West Street, south past Accura HealthCare Center,



LARRY DEVINE | TIMES HERALD

Helping collect donations to New Opportunities food pantry at Cruise for a Cause are (clockwise, from bottom left) Brian Brauckman, Breanna Augustus, RoAnn Kofron, Nikkie Lay, Billijo Henkelman, Amy Hunziker and Amber Schon. Augustus, Lay and Henkelman are from the pin-up girl contest in Brauckman's annual Friday Night Special car show. The 1958 Chevy Impala is owned by Jeremy "Worm" Carstens of Carroll.

and then south to the St. Anthony Nursing Home and Regency Park Nursing and Rehabilitation Center area. After the parade, the Highway 30 cruise will get underway.

Brauckman said the cruise nights give participants and spectators something to enjoy while everybody can stay safely separated.

"Everybody enjoys seeing the old cars and the new stuff, a little bit of everything has been cruising — new stuff, old stuff, motorcycles. I've even seen a tractor out there," Brauckman said.

This weekend's cruise also offers another opportunity to help the food pantry. New Opportunities will set up again in the parking lot between Village Park East and Piranha Club to accept food and cash donations.

People can drop off deliveries at other times in baskets at New Opportunities' Family Development Center, 23751 Highway 30 East. Items needed include canned meat, canned fruit, canned vegetables, cereal, soup, pasta dinners, peanut butter, jelly, diapers and



Lew Orcutt of Carroll visits Cruise for a Cause driving his 1953 Nash Rambler. The license plate is a play on the 1958 song "Beep Beep" by the Playmates.

toothpaste. Monetary donations may be mailed to New Opportunities, P.O. Box 427, Carroll, IA 51401. All dona-

tions are tax-deductible.

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, Kofron said, the most-recent statistics indicating the food struggles in Carroll County and the entire state were striking.

The USDA Economic Research Service's 2018 documented figures indicated

9.2 percent of Iowa households were food-insecure, meaning they lacked reliable access to significant quantity of affordable and nutritious food. In Carroll County in 2017, 10.1 percent of households — approximately 2,070 people, 14.6 percent of whom were children — were food-in-

secure.

Feeding America's Iowa's statistics indicate that one in seven children and one in nine people in the state or 341,890 altogether struggle with hunger.

New Opportunities in service year 2019 served 1,378 households — 3,162 people — in Carroll County.



Audubon County
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & CLINICS