



Students from Challenger Middle School in Glendale recently held a food drive to benefit the St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance. The results of the school's efforts, this year, and in past years, have really been incredible.

A few years ago, Mr. Chet Provorse, from St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance went to Challenger Elementary to conduct their Hunger 101 program. St. Mary's, an area non-profit organization, creates food boxes for families who would otherwise go hungry and uses the Hunger 101 course to demonstrate to people how much hunger exists and why their program is so necessary.

Their message really got across to one of Challenger's teachers, Ashleigh King, who teaches sixth grade Special Education. Ms. King was able to share her excitement for helping others with the students in her school. She inspired her sixth grade class, and the rest of the students in the school to get involved. As a result, in the last three years, the school has collected nearly 30,000 food items for St. Mary's.

This year, Ms. King, her sixth grade class, and all of the students from Challenger Middle School, took their efforts a step further. In just two weeks time, the school made the food drive their mission and collected more than 15,600 food items!! The Challenger School planned to cap their two-week drive with a one-mile "Fun Run." Nasty weather created the need to have the run moved indoors, but that didn't stop the students from making their one final donation in order to participate in the event.

The food that was raised from Challenger Middle School this year would have placed them among the leaders in Arizona's recently completed National High School Student Food Drive, if they had been eligible to compete among high schools.

It is very inspiring to see the effort that these middle school students have made to help others.