

Elementary Students Give Back Through Soup-er Bowl Drive

By: Alesa Gerald

Although second-grade teacher Cheryl Wisch won't be watching the Super Bowl, she has some other traditions that make this time of year special to her. For about 20 years, she has led a Super Bowl-themed canned food drive at her campus.

During the Soup-er Bowl Soup Drive, teachers and students of J.L. Boren Elementary School collect cans to give to those in need. The drive is part of a service project for Bears Care, the school's student council.

"I knew that food pantries after Christmas start running low because they're depleted during Christmas," said Wisch. "I'm trying to connect what's happening in the world with ways to help others, so I came up with soup and Super Bowl because I know most of the kids do watch the Super Bowl."

The Soup-er Bowl Soup Drive occurs annually the week before and after the Super Bowl. Boren Elementary usually donates about 15 boxes of canned goods to the Mansfield Mission Center. Students also wear their favorite jersey to keep with the theme.

"When we receive donations to our Mission Market, it gives families in our community another way to put food on the table if they're having financial difficulties," said Carmin MacMillian, executive director of Mansfield Mission Center. "It's a way to show them love and let them know their community cares about them. We couldn't do what we do without the generosity of MISD."

Wisch said she enjoys doing the canned food drive because the students get to experience giving to others with no reward.

"We try very hard to teach our kids service for others, and I think the parents appreciate we are trying to teach our students that," she said.

Students who participated said they feel they are making a difference by bringing the cans.

"I think it's important to help others because some people don't have food, and then they can have food to stay alive and be healthy," said Landry Slinkard, second-grader at Boren Elementary.

Their team may not win the big game on Sunday, but Soup-er Bowl Soup Drive organizers said the drive is still a touchdown for the community. The Mansfield Mission Center is open to donations from anyone. Its hours are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.