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Feed the Need a community affair

BY AARON MOODY, Staff writer

KNIGHTDALE - With The News & Observer's annual Feed the Need drive set for April 17, those at the Community Helpers Services Center in Knightdale are only thinking of one thing - doing to others as they'd want others to do to them.

Community Helpers President Billy Neal said that's been his agency's motto for generations, and it was something his father passed on to him before passing away 43 years ago.

"Our motto is 'help a man in need because you never know when you'll need a hand yourself,'" Neal said. "We're doing what we were taught many, many years ago."

Community services is a family-run agency that has been doing the good deed for a long time. Family members run it, and although all the volunteers aren't family members, Neal says they are all treated as such, especially considering the good deeds they do in the Knightdale community.

The group has now worked with the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina since 1999, and says Feed the Need, set to be held for the fourth time, is an extremely important community service project.

"It's very important because there's so many people that need help out there and we see it on a weekly basis," Neal said as he prepared for the arrival of a family picking up a food box.

"We leave no one behind. If we can get everyone one meal, we're very happy. It's very, very

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important."

Neal said Community Helpers never has a great deal of funds or goods to offer the community, and Feed the Need is one of the efforts that helps the Food Bank support his organization. The Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina supplies his agency, like many others, on a weekly basis.

When his agency runs low on funding, the family pays for it out of pocket. That's just how serious Neal is about the advice he took from its past generations.

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"We keep doing it because we want to do something. We want to give back and help with this problem," he said.

The first three years of Feed the Need resulted in more than \$167,000 and nearly 40,000 pounds of food collected - approximately 670,000 meals supplied to the food bank to fight hunger in the area.

Neal said the Food Bank's serious approach to hunger issues pushes partner agencies like his to work harder to do the same in the shared effort.

Neal added what Community Helpers gets out of its efforts is cliché.

"It might sound silly, but we get joy. There's joy helping people that need something," he said. "I think we all need to get involved and let's push this as hard as we can. There's a great need and it's going to get even worse. We're getting by, but as far as putting a dent in the problem I don't know I'd use that word. There's too many people out there that need help."

The Community Helpers Services Center is a non-profit organization and is a member of the Knightdale Chamber of Commerce. The center is located at 111-B N. First Street in Knightdale.

For more information on the April 17 Feed the Need event, visit [www.newsobserver.com/feedtheneed](http://www.newsobserver.com/feedtheneed), e-mail [feedtheneed@newsobserver.com](mailto:feedtheneed@newsobserver.com), or call 836-5990 or 836-2870.

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