

Helping the Hungry

Leo Bonilla feels lucky that his family's kitchen is always filled with food. That's why the 11-year-old from Algonquin, Illinois, has made it his mission to help people who are less fortunate.

About 47 million Americans are food insecure. That means they don't always have access to enough affordable, healthy food.

Leo first learned about this problem during the Covid pandemic in 2020. He saw a TV news report that showed families waiting in long lines for food.

"I didn't realize that many people didn't have food," Leo remembers. "It's not fair, so I just wanted to help them."

Leo asked his parents if he could help struggling families

by donating all his money: \$22. They agreed and matched his donation. Leo and his parents then asked family and friends to contribute too. Soon they had raised about \$1,500. They decided to give the money to the D300 Food Pantry, which provides meals to families in Leo's community who are in need.

Making a Difference

But Leo didn't stop there. He also decided to hold food drives in his neighborhood and at his school. To encourage students to donate, the sixth-grader turned the food drives into competitions to see which class brought in

the most cereal, pasta, canned vegetables, and other necessities. So far, Leo has collected about 11,700 pounds of food for D300. He's also helped raise more than \$10,000 for the food pantry.

Leo hopes to inspire other kids to help those in need in their communities.

"Think about it," he says. "If you didn't have food, wouldn't you want people to help you?"

—by Alicia Green



Leo Bonilla collected about 3,000 pounds of food at a food drive last April.

A Day of Giving

Since 2012, the Tuesday after Thanksgiving has been a day to volunteer, spread kindness, and help people in need. It's called GivingTuesday. Last year, more than 36 million people took part across the country. Do you want to get involved this year? Here are some tips.

Find an idea.

It can be as small as donating old toys or as big as leading a cleanup of your neighborhood.

Get others involved.

Ask your friends, family, and classmates to help plan and participate in the project.

Keep it going!

This year, GivingTuesday is December 2. But you can start your project anytime and keep it going year-round.

