

Students stage 24-hour event to help homeless teens

By Edith Decker
of the Daily Courier

About a dozen teens camped out Friday night at the former Ray's supermarket parking lot to bring in donations around the clock for fellow teens in need.

Members of the Josephine County Foundation organized the 24-hour event, called Pay It Forward, to raise money and bring in supplies for homeless teens at local high schools.

"Our goal right now is \$3,500 and we'd love to get more," said Katherine Haley, a sophomore who is on the board of the foundation as well as being an officer of Hidden Valley High School's chapter of Future Business Leaders of America. FBLA helped organize the event.

"The foundation started from Hidden Valley, so we're rooted there, but there are kids on the board from all the high schools," Haley said.

By 9:30 a.m. the teens had filled two large boxes with donations of clothing, school supplies and other items, and raised nearly \$2,500. And they still had a day of fundraising to go.

They started at 4 p.m. Friday and vowed to remain until 4 p.m. Saturday, getting all the donations they could for the project, one of several the foundation has organized this year.

Kathy Carnes was one of those who



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LEFT: Katherine Haley, who is on the board of both the Josephine County Foundation and the Hidden Valley High School Future Business Leaders of America, sorts through some donations Saturday morning at the former Ray's supermarket lot. About a dozen teens camped out overnight at the supermarket to accept donations around the clock for the foundation's homeless teens project. RIGHT: Hidden Valley High students Kenny Vanleeuwen and Devin Pine ask passing motorists for donations.

stopped in, popped her trunk and pulled out several bags of clothes along with a new blanket and sleeping bag.

"If you can help kids out at this age, well, I hope it turns things around in their lives," Carnes said.

Meanwhile, other teens were on the sidewalk, holding signs and buckets at the busy intersection of Williams Highway and Union Avenue — waiting for the red lights to back up traffic so they could step up for a donation.

"It was so busy last night," said Kenny Vanleeuwen, a Hidden Valley freshman. "We made a lot."

Another group of students was setting up the dunk tank for when the air got a bit warmer and more of their classmates were expected.

Haley said they'd been fortified by parent-delivered fast food. "We had pizzas last night and we got some donuts and Burger King this morning."

Anyone who missed donating, but wishes to, may send a check to The Josephine County Foundation, P.O. Box 673, Murphy, OR 97533, marked "Pay It Forward" in the memo line.

Clothing will be donated to the various school closets for teens in need, other supplies will go to the homeless teen backpack project and cash will go to the Pay It Forward program to help teens, Haley said.