

Grafton parish pitches in for pack-a-thon aid

Written by CAROL POMEDAY

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<http://www.ozaukeepress.com/images/013113/packSM.png> **St. Paul Church seeks volunteers Feb. 2 to help prepare meals for Tanzania**

A pack-a-thon to provide nutritious meals for starving people in Tanzania will be held Saturday, Feb. 2, at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Grafton.

The rice-based meals, which include protein and freeze-dried vegetables, will be packaged from 9 a.m. to noon at the church, 701 Washington St.

Volunteers are needed to work one-hour shifts. The fee is \$25 per person. The money will be used to purchase and ship food to Tanzania.



Participants will learn about rural Tanzania, Charles Mpanda, director of Simple Hope East Africa, the Montonyok Parents Trust Orphanage and the Lake Eyasi Hazabe Hunting and Gathering Tribe, who will receive the food.

Simple Hope of Menomonee Falls is coordinating the effort with parish member Dorothy Monson, who traveled to Tanzania twice last year to teach women how to can food.

Simple Hope founders Pam Schwalbach and Karen Puhl asked Monson to join their team after learning about her canning skills. St. Paul sponsored her trips, which were in May and October.

Although Tanzania is in a drought and crops are not plentiful, when they do have extra food, it is often wasted because there is no refrigeration, Monson said.

“Simple Hope wanted to teach them how to preserve food and the only way is by canning,” she said.

“It was a phenomenal experience to be in a foreign country, not being able to speak the language and yet communicating and teaching. They were so eager to learn. It was pure joy to teach them something I’ve done all my life.

“When we distributed the food for them to take home, it was like we gave them a million dollars because they knew they could feed their families.”

Monson, who has a large garden at her Grafton home, taught the Tanzanian women the

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open-kettle, boiling-water method. They canned tomato sauce, mango-pineapple mix and apple slices. They also pickled cucumbers, okra and green beans using dill seeds Monson brought from her garden.

“Only a few jars didn’t seal, but that gave them a chance to taste it. They liked the mango and pineapple together,” Monson said.

Propane camp stoves at a vocational center were used for canning. The women also learned to make chlorine and purify water for canning, drinking, cooking and bathing.

After the canning sessions in October, each woman was given a booklet in Swahili of the canning recipes and the process for purifying water.

“They are now to be the teachers to the people in their communities,” Monson said.

The vocational center is applying for a food license so some of the canned items can be sold to hotels and restaurants.

The center also teaches sewing, knitting, crocheting and office skills for women to earn money and improve their lives.

To participate in the pack-a-thon or sponsor a volunteer, call the church at 377-4659 or visit www.simple-hope.org.

Image Information: CANNING RECIPES printed in Swahili were held by Tanzanian women who learned how to can fruits and vegetables from Grafton resident Dorothy Monson (back row, left) and Sharon Puhl, a co-founder of Simple Hope. The charity is organizing a pack-a-thon Saturday morning at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Grafton to provide nutritious meals to starving people in Tanzania.

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