Written by MARK JAEGER
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Good-natured competition raises food, cash for pantry

Organizers of Saukville's Man v. Hunger challenge went a long way toward replenishing the shelves of the Saukville Community Food Pantry on Saturday, and they had a good time in the process.

The good-natured competition combined eating and feats of athletic ability in a tag-team format.

Nine four-member teams took part in the showdown, collecting $2,400 in donations and 1,800 in food items for the pantry.

"It was an awesome success. We drew pretty good crowds and everyone had a good time," said organizer Dawn Brooks.

"We would have liked to have a few more teams, but the amount of money and food we were able to collect was amazing. I don't think anyone expected it would be so successful in its first year."

Brooks said people are already asking to sign up for next year's challenge.

"People are pretty excited. We are definitely going to keep it on the same day — the Saturday after Fish Day," she said.

The challenge started with contestants eating Reuben sandwiches at Between the Greens bar on Highway I in the Town of Saukville, then biking down Cold Springs Road to Messina Italian Restaurant on Progress Drive.

The second team member then ate a double-sized meatball sandwich before running to the Firehouse Restaurant on Dekora Street.

The next team member then had to eat five jumbo Habanera ranch wings, and jump rope to J's Sports Bar & Grill across from Veterans Park.

The anchor member of the relay team finished the gastronomic part of the challenge by consuming a Papa burger.

Teams then had to haul their collected food items to the Railroad Station bar on Railroad Street, about a half-mile away, using only non-motorized conveyances.

Teams utilized shopping carts, mail carriers, wagons and trailers to transport their donations.

"I think that proved to be the biggest challenge, moving all the food," said Brooks, who also competed in the challenge.

"I heard someone say they were going to use a horse next year."

The scratch winners were a team called Four Fat Guys, a team comprised of staff members from Between the Greens and the Railroad Station.

A team from St. Peter's United Church of Christ won the handicap challenge, which deducted time for each donated dollar and food item.

Food pantry Executive Director Mark Gierach said the influx of food and money couldn't have come at a better time.

"Summer is always a very difficult time for food pantries because young children are out of school and often don't get the food they need from the school lunch program," Gierach said.

"What makes it especially difficult is that even though there is high demand for food at the pantry, summer tends to be a very busy time and people don't always think about supporting their food pantries."

Food can be picked up at St. Peter's United Church of Christ, 166 W. Dekora St. on the second Thursday of each month, from 6 to 8 p.m; the third Thursday from 1 to 4 p.m.; and the fourth Thursday from 9 a.m. to noon.

Starting in September, the third Thursday collection will be eliminated, and replaced by Saturday hours from 9 a.m. to noon.

Pantry details are available at the website stpetersuccsaukville.org.

Image Information: TACKLING THE FIRST leg of the Man v. Hunger challenge was Dawn Brooks, who downed a Rueben sandwich at Between the Greens.