The UA4Food campaign is now officially underway, and employees are encouraged to donate food or help collect donations in their departments as food drive ambassadors.

This year, UA4Food is being held in conjunction with the 1,000 Acts of Kindness Challenge as part of UA Cares campaign. UA Cares is the University's annual workplace campaign, which gives employees the opportunity to donate to any nonprofit organization or University program of their choice. This year, the campaign launched the 1,000 Acts of Kindness Challenge volunteer challenge to encourage employees to also work hands-on with community organizations.

At the end of the 1,000 Acts of Kindness challenge in April, Community Relations will hang a paper chain, with each link representing an act of kindness, in front of Old Main to showcase the campus’ volunteerism.

The annual UA4Food campaign, which started yesterday and runs through April 6, has benefited the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona since 2004 and to date has collected 197,529 pounds of food.

"The thing that excites me about the UA4Food drive is the variety of people who get involved," says Sheila McGinnis, UA director of outreach and community partnerships. "The fact that students, staff, faculty and even neighbors get involved brings a smile to my face."

UA4Food also will help to address issues of food security facing some students on campus.

Community Relations will host drawings throughout the campaign, with proceeds benefiting the Campus Pantry, a nonprofit started in 2012 to provide resources to students who don’t have enough food. Students and employees can come to the pantry on distribution days and get the food they need for free, when presenting a CatCard.

"Now that the Campus Pantry has obtained an official nonprofit status from the federal government, they are able to work directly with the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona to get additional food they may be short on, or seek help in organizing their efforts," McGinnis said. "(We) hope to gather some funds that will go directly to the pantry."

Throughout the UA4Food campaign, donation bins will be set up around campus, and many UA departments will engage in friendly competition to collect the most food and monetary donations. Every dollar donated can turn into four meals, according to the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona.

UA4Food ambassadors are needed to help coordinate food drive efforts in their departments. For more information on how to volunteer as an ambassador, call McGinnis at 626-4671.
As part of both the food drive and the 1,000 Acts of Kindness challenge, a group of 14 employees and students volunteered at the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona on Saturday, where they packed 3,513 food boxes and bags with 63,000 pounds of food.

"I found the experience very rewarding," said Samantha Sowerby, business manager in the Department of Marketing in Eller College of Management. "It was great to see everyone pull together to get as many boxes packed as we could. I also realized how very fortunate I am to have an office job. After three hours of packing boxes on an assembly line I was wiped. The best part was hearing how many families in need would benefit from our efforts."

The UA4Food drive will culminate with the Stuff the Cat Tran event on April 6 from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. The campus community will be invited to bring donations to Cherry and University in an effort to fill up a Cat Tran shuttle with food.

The UA community can continue to donate after the official drive has ended. Those who bring a canned-good donation can get reduced admission to Spring Fling, hosted by the Associated Students of the University of Arizona, April 8-10.

To learn more about the food drive and to get involved, visit the UA4Food website.

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From volunteering with nonprofits to coordinating creative fundraisers, UA employees are engaged in a variety of efforts to help those in need.

In this regular "Connect to Community" series, we highlight some of the inspiring work employees are doing in the community, either in their free time or as part of their University positions.

Are you a UA employee who's working to make a difference in the community? Do you know of an employee or group on campus that is doing something unique to give back? If so, let us know about it by emailing uaatwork@email.arizona.edu. Your story could be featured in a future edition of Lo Que Pasa.


Links:
[1] http://ua4food.arizona.edu/
[3] https://www.eller.arizona.edu/
[4] mailto:uaatwork@email.arizona.edu