

Lee College Athletics reaches goal of donating 20,000 canned goods to community

Student-athletes joined by Lee High School Interact Club for latest donation of 1,300 items

BAYTOWN, TX — With Thanksgiving approaching and many local families in need of help to fill their cabinets and pantries, Lee College basketball and volleyball student-athletes partnered with the Robert E. Lee High School Interact Club last week to donate 1,300 canned goods to St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Baytown.

This latest donation allowed the Lee College Athletic Department to reach an ambitious goal set when then-Athletics Director and Head Basketball Coach Roy Champagne launched the "I Can, You Can, We Can" initiative in 2009: to collect 20,000 canned goods to help feed the hungry in the community.

After collecting 1,600 canned goods in the first year of the project, the athletic department has collected and donated 6,100 canned goods this year alone. Even more canned goods are still awaiting delivery to churches, charities and food banks all over town.

"It is a simple act that many of us take for granted — having food to eat," Champagne said. "Our athletes do a tremendous job connecting to the individuals and families that receive these items within our Baytown community. I, myself, am overwhelmed at the amount of help that is needed just within our own city limits."

Both Champagne and Head Volleyball Coach Paige Sorge believe athletes have a responsibility to volunteer their personal time and give back to the community in any way possible. Members of the basketball and volleyball teams regularly visit local elementary schools to speak out against bullying and encourage kids to be stellar students and avid readers; spend time with, mentor and cheer on high-school athletes at their games and practices; and help cook and serve free dinners to neighbors in need.

"It's a good way to show the community they're thankful and appreciative for all the support and resources they've been given," Sorge said.