

Food Brings Hope gets governor's recognition

Published: Thursday, January 10, 2013 at 5:30 a.m.

It's little wonder that Food Brings Hope has received recognition from Gov. Rick Scott and First Lady Ann Scott.

The program is a private initiative that was launched by Forough Hosseini, senior vice president of ICI Homes, six years ago when she learned some of her children's classmates were homeless.

A donor-designated fund of the Community Foundation of the United Way of Volusia & Flagler Counties, the program that aids homeless and other economically disadvantaged children expanded into northwest Volusia County last month when it began an after-school program at Pierson Elementary.

Food Brings Hope works with about 500 children in at least seven schools. The program offers after-school meals, mentoring, tutoring and trips to reward academic success. Field trips can include sporting events or cultural attractions. The kids are always fed on the trips too. That's no small thing for these impoverished children.

Hosseini's discovery indicates that even with all the government-assistance programs we have — and even during boom times — children can still fall through the cracks.

The number of children in poverty has risen sharply in recent years, making the need for community-based programs even more urgent. Educators have seen free-or-reduced lunch programs more than double in size.

The task of assisting and helping to guide these children isn't cheap. Every community needs donors and volunteers to help aid the poor and the underprivileged.

The charity doesn't just offer groceries and meals to homeless children. At Campbell Middle School, 12 students were chosen last fall to attend FBHonors, an after-school honors program.

Food Brings Hope also bought gifts and food for children during the Christmas break.

How much is this program needed? More than 2,200 homeless schoolchildren were enrolled in Volusia County last fall, and Flagler County had 367.

Those numbers should disturb the conscience of the community. They point to the plight of children who, on any given day, may not know where they may sleep, or what, if anything, they may have to eat.

Gov. Scott and Ann Scott are impressed with this local nonprofit's work, as they should be. What we must all never forget is there is a consistent need in Volusia and Flagler counties for such compassionate efforts.

Food Brings Hope's website can be found at FoodBringsHope.org.

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