

I had the opportunity to do my community service at the South Plains Food Bank. The South Plains Food Bank was founded in 1983. The first food bank was St. Mary's Food Bank in Phoenix, Arizona, founded by John van Hengel in 1967. My service activities at the food bank included unloading empty boxes and putting them on a rail line, filling up the empty boxes, and then loading them on the pallet. There were eight students in my group, and we were each assigned a cart filled with a different food item. Food items consisted of nonperishable goods such as canned pears, canned veggies, dried peas and lentils, bagged raisins and dates, bagged almonds, boxed noodles, and oatmeal. We went in a specific order around all of the boxes and put our items in the box. The team leader was very organized and instructed how to fill the boxes. We had to put the food items in the box a certain way and in a specific order so the food would all fit into the box. After the main items were put into the boxes, there were carts filled with random items such as coffee, puddings, peanut butter, and more canned goods. I was amazed at how much food fit into those boxes. After the boxes were filled, we closed the boxes and loaded them up on the pallets. We filled 36 boxes at a time. At the end of our service hours, we had filled a total of 486 boxes! Once the boxes were loaded on the pallets, the pallet was then taken to the holding area or loaded up onto the trucks. People can apply online or in person to get a food voucher. The food bank has a drive-up area where people give their vouchers in exchange for a food box. The food bank also has senior boxes for people over the age of 60. The South Plains Food Bank gets monetary donations from thousands of organizations and their employees. Anyone can also donate online through the food bank website. Many organizations also have food drives throughout the year and donate the food to the food bank. Organizations also donate food directly to the food bank. With the monetary donations, the food bank can purchase their goods through factories. People are also able to volunteer their time at the food bank as well.

While we were there, there were several regular volunteers. Volunteers can be any age but have to be accompanied by an adult if under the age of 17. Doing my community service at the South Plains Food Bank was a very rewarding experience for me. I was very motivated to volunteer my time to the community and to help make a difference in someone's life. The whole time I was filling those boxes, I couldn't help but think that these pop-tarts are going to feed a hungry child, or a single mother will be able to make her children a meal with the noodles and sauces. I plan on taking my family back and volunteering at the food bank and start a new family tradition.