

Good Morning Reader

Her hunger to help brings food to nonprofit

BY DAN KELLY
READING EAGLE

Nevaeh Daniels-Rivera's first name spells "heaven" backwards.

It's becoming a more common name in the Reading School District, said district spokeswoman Kristin Boyd Edwards.

Maybe it's a nod to the religiosity of the city's ever-changing population.

All her mom, Jackie Rivera, knows is that Nevaeh has been a joy to raise. She thinks the goodness in her daughter's heart must come from somewhere up above.

"She's the most wonderful girl I've ever met," Jackie said.

"If she has a dollar and you need 50 cents she'll give you the whole dollar," the proud mom said. "It doesn't matter if you're family, a friend or a stranger — race, religion, nothing matters to her."

Daphne Klahr, executive director of the Reading Recreation Commission, said Nevaeh embraced the Rec's Girls Leadership Program at Northeast Middle School. From the start, the 12-year-old seventh-grader was on board.

The commission itself is a partnership between the city and the school district.

"Our girls each came up with a different pay-it-forward idea to benefit the entire school or the community," Klahr said. "Some of those projects included inspirational signs throughout the school, all of the lockers decorated with candy and positive messages, banners, candy for students at lunch to celebrate the end of testing, and desserts and a thank-you poster for the teachers."



COURTESY OF READING RECREATION COMMISSION

Daphne Klahr, left, executive director of the Reading Recreation Commission, with Nevaeh Daniels-Rivera, Nathalia Concepcion, Joselin Alicea and Yanire Ortiz, beside a van that helped deliver 45 bags of non-perishable food to Safe Berks.

Nevaeh's project went a little further, Klahr said.

The final project involved collecting non-perishable food items to be donated to Safe Berks (formerly Berks Women in Crisis), Klahr said. Each homeroom in the school was given a shopping bag to put food items into and the food was collected May 1 through May 5.

Alex Brown, school principal, got on the public address system and announced that any student who brought in a food item would be allowed to dress down on May 5.

"The response was overwhelming," Klahr said.

More than 45 bags and boxes of food were donated by Northeast stu-

dents and teachers.

"The staff at Safe Berks were absolutely blown away by the donation and said that Nevaeh's food drive collected more items in five days than they sometimes collect in months," Klahr said.

"I am so proud of all of the Northeast Girls in the Leadership program," Klahr said.

Nevaeh said she didn't collect the food for honors or recognition or to outdo her classmates. Her reason was more palpable to her, much closer to home.

"I did it because I know what it feels like to be hungry," she said.

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