

Pets of the Week



Stella is a medium-sized girl who shouldn't get any bigger than what she is now. She is bonded with her sister, Zoey, but they don't have to be adopted together.



Marley is a young girl who needs a home where she can run. She loves to go on walks and get all the yummy treats.



Meet Gee! A shelter staff favorite, this young boy does well with other cats and loves his people.



If you like big and chunky cats, then Barney is your boy! This handsome hunk loves being held and brushed. He gets along well with other cats and all people.

The Tri-County Animal Shelter and Adoption Center is on Icaria Road in Tyner and can be reached at 221-8514.

Jackson praises food pantry and its volunteers

Superintendent speaks at appreciation luncheon

BY NICOLE BOWMAN-LAYTON
Editor

The Edenton-Chowan Food Pantry celebrated its volunteers recently during a volunteer appreciation luncheon at Edenton Baptist Church.

The event, held Oct. 21, brought about 80 people to the church's fellowship hall to listen about how their work in battling hunger in Chowan County is helping one of the most vulnerable segments of the county's population — its youth.

Edenton-Chowan Schools Superintendent Rob Jackson discussed how feeding students has helped them academically during his keynote speech.

Jackson provided information through the state of North Carolina's Roadmap of Needs, which evaluates school districts on 20 factors. According to the report in 2016, Edenton-Chowan Schools were ranked 96 out of 100 school districts for having 31.6% of children having food insecurity. In 2019,

the district ranks 87 out of 100 schools with a percentage of 20.9%.

Jackson said part of the district's problem is that the county is a food desert — a place where it is hard to find affordable, fresh food — which impacts children's access to healthy food.

"Because of the work of the food pantry, we have seen positive gain. You are making a difference," he said.

While the school district ranked 82nd for students who are considered obese in 2016, it is now ranked 98. Jackson attributed part of the problem with the fact that the best food for people is the most expensive. Jackson said the food pantry provides health food for children that they otherwise may not have access to.

This academic year, the percentage of students who are on free/reduced lunch program are 66.8% of White Oak students, 72.1% of D.F. Walker students, 67.9% of Chowan Middle students and 55.7% of John A. Holmes students. Overall, the school district's average is 65%.

Jackson also noted that



PHOTOS NICOLE BOWMAN-LAYTON/CHOWAN HERALD

Edenton-Chowan Schools Superintendent Rob Jackson (left photo) and Edenton-Chowan Food Pantry Executive Director Joe Rizzo (below photo) speak during the food pantry's volunteer appreciation luncheon.



the number of students living in single-parent households had increased with the district ranked 85 in 2016 and 89 in 2019. He said that without another parent or authority figure

to check on homework and other basics, the students may not be eating or doing what they need to do to be successful in school.

Some of the older students often come to school

late or neglect to eat breakfast before coming to school. To fill this gap, the district has introduced Second-Chance Breakfast between first and second period at John A. Holmes and Grab-n-Go breakfast at Chowan Middle. The school district has seen an increase in the number of children eating breakfast from 3,440 so far this academic year to 2,450 last academic year in CMS, and 1,741 to 1325 at Holmes.

"Thank you for making a difference," Jackson concluded. "I hope you all pat yourselves on the shoulder. Together we are making a difference in the lives of Chowan County's children."

Larry Ekberg, board president, noted that the food pantry has 600 clients each month and served at least 10 families in emergency situations this past year. It gave out 260 senior boxes. It's Bookbag Buddies program gave out 150 bags program every week while school was in session. The summer children's nutrition program averaged 30 families a week.

"This doesn't happen

without the help of people like you," he said.

Food pantry Executive Director Joe Rizzo thanked the volunteers for their work. He noted how some people can remember the day John Kennedy was shot, or the day the Challenger exploded. For him, he remembers his first day of work at the food pantry.

"I was new to Edenton one year ago, essentially sitting on the couch all day. I had retired in 2001, and I knew that sitting idle day by day is a recipe for disaster," he said. "And I came across the food pantry. It was one of the best days of my life."

"God is the chairman of the board. I'm not going to argue that," Rizzo said. "I'm very fortunate to be part of our mission to eliminate hunger malnutrition among the county's most vulnerable residents — our older citizens and our children."

He thanked the volunteers for their hard work and dedication. "The joy that comes with making a difference in the lives of those who live beside us is something to be treasured. It's something that we should hold on to."

There have been BIGG claims made by a candidate that he supports economic growth for Edenton, despite working as economic developer for a competing county.

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