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Annual Adopt-a-Basket Program Helps UM Feed Area Families

Donations being accepted through mid-November

NOVEMBER 2, 2020 BY EDWIN B. SMITH

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OXFORD, Miss. – As winter holidays draw near, the **University of Mississippi** community is once again working together to provide meals for area families in need.

Just in time for Thanksgiving, the 16th annual Adopt-a-Basket program is accepting food donations Nov. 9-13 at the Ole Miss Student Union Ballroom. Baskets will be distributed Nov. 19 and 20. The event is co-sponsored by the Student Union, Associated Student Body and Department of Intercollegiate Athletics.

"We are asking departments and organizations who are interested in participating to donate whole baskets, rather than individual items," said Will Takewell, associate director of the Ole Miss Student Union and ASB co-adviser. "Last year, we provided over 100 baskets to families of staff members from the departments that requested them.

"This year, we are teaming up with our partners in athletics to hopefully provide even more baskets to the LOU community in addition to our community here on campus."

The list of accepted items includes corn, green beans, onions, sweetened condensed milk, chicken broth, marshmallows, brown sugar, cinnamon, vanilla extract, sweet potatoes, potatoes, sugar and cornmeal. Cash donations will be accepted to sponsor baskets.

"One thing I'm really excited about this year is that we changed up the list a little bit, thereby giving families the opportunity to let us know if we need to adhere to any dietary or cultural needs," said Devika Ganapathy, student coordinator for the program. "Not all families can eat or choose to eat 'traditional' Thanksgiving foods."

In light of COVID-19, the program received a donation from the UM Columns Society to help provide face masks and hand sanitizer in each basket. Adopt-a-Basket is also working with the Willie Price Lab School program to make sure each family gets a special note for the holiday season.

"We are taking quite a bit of additional precautions and will have limited numbers of people helping to assemble the baskets," Takewell said. "We also have a process to disinfect everything that is donated to us this year."

The event has provided meals for more than 1,000 families over the last several years.

Individuals or groups interested in making donations should visit https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UQ-nJSuYSR6eAnDGUKp-5nr-wN_r-4yamjvOLUR2B3U/ and https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScu9OB21a0BDU9oq-nd_U9BGUMqeFt8oDI3_FERp_dTwpb4_Q/viewform.

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