

Thanksgiving Food Drive

Our club along with our local Interact Clubs conducts a food drive at local markets to distribute complete Thanksgiving dinners to San Juan Capistrano families in need as well as Marine families in need at Camp Pendleton.

Members of the SJC Rotary (typically about 20-25 members; San Juan Hills HS Interact and Capistrano Valley Christian School Interact (typically about 20 teens) do the following activities on the Saturday before Thanksgiving Day:

- Collect groceries from a wish list handed out to shoppers at 4 different local grocery stores.
- Keep a tally of items so at the end of the day we can buy items that we are missing to be able to have a complete dinner.
- Help drive items to distributions point, divide groceries, fill boxes and distribute to families.

San Juan Elementary School develops a list of families in need in the community and arranges for the boxes to be picked up or delivered the day of the event. The children at San Juan Elementary school decorate the boxes for Thanksgiving. The family resource officer from the City's adopted 1/11 Marine Unit coordinates the pickup of food for families in need at the base.

The event serves 80-100 needy San Juan Capistrano and Marine Corps families at Camp Pendleton Marine Base

Santa's Visit

The club reaches out to 6 local elementary schools and invites children to participate in holiday crafts and a visit with Santa.

Event Day: gates open at 9:00 am. Children are treated to activities such as cookie decorating, holiday crafts, face painting etc. from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm. Mr. and Mrs. Santa arrive via Orange County Fire Authority Engine from our local Fire Station #7 and present each child with an age appropriate gift.

Rotarians and volunteers conduct the following activities:

- Toy distribution, including Spanish/English translation.
- Children's activities including cookie decorating face painting and holiday crafts.
- Decorate the Multipurpose Room at Marco Forster Middle School (MFMS) for Mr. and Mrs. Santa on stage and entry way.

The event serves about 500-600 kids

Students Run Los Angeles (SRLA)

The San Juan Capistrano Rotary Club sponsors Marco Forster Middle School (MFMS) in the Students Run Los Angeles (SRLA) program. MFMS was the first middle school in the Capistrano Unified School District (CUSD) to participate in the Students Run LA Marathon Program and is now in its eleventh year. The team consists of 7th and 8th grade students from Marco as well as local high school students who ran when they were students at Marco. Coaches include teachers, administrators, and other running enthusiasts from the community, including Rotarians from our club.

The main goal or objective of SRLA is to help students work hard to set long-term goals, help with character development, and discipline. Students train together for over six months to prepare for the marathon, and experience the benefits of improved health. The program instills discipline, determination and a sense of pride in those runners who accomplish their goals. These kids typically do not have the means to pay for transportation, lodging, training and race costs for the event. The San Juan Capistrano Rotary sponsors the club in their endeavors by providing a grant to pay for transportation and lodging for these kids. Each year, we have Rotarians participating in training and the send-off for the kids on Saturday.

In addition to the support provided to the community, we notice that many of the recipients of our support later become volunteers in our community and get involved.

1/11 Marine Unit Adoption Committee and Direct Support

The adopted Marine Corps unit for our town is the 1/11 Marine Unit. When the marines and sailors on Camp Pendleton are deployed the SJC Rotary through the 1/11 Adoption Committee and also directly support the families with various activities via their Family Readiness Officer.

Our club provides financial support to the Adoption Committee. The adoption committee works as a liaison between the community and the unit to respond to the needs of families while their loved ones are deployed.

Our direct support typically includes supplies for the events and/or funding for activities. For this coming year, we plan to encourage Rotarians to participate by volunteering at events such as the Trunk or Treat for Halloween; Thanksgiving Dinner (outlined above); Family Picnic Activities; Baby Showers and the Christmas Holiday Party. Our hope is to start by getting at least 5-10 Rotarians to participate in each event.

Each event usually supports 20-50 families