



**United Way
of Bradley County**

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United Way agencies helped by Southern Heritage Bank Food Drive

Many recipients of United Way of Bradley County agencies' services will be helped due to the generosity of those in this community who participated in the recent "Cleveland Helping Cleveland" food drive.

This is the 11th year that Southern Heritage Bank has conducted the event. Thousands of pounds of non-perishable items were donated during the event, which took place from Nov. 9 through Nov. 13.

Several United Way of Bradley County agencies will benefit from the donations, as the food will go toward helping stock pantries at these agencies and assist many of their clients.

"I am always so proud to see how this community comes together and helps those in need through this event," said Southern Heritage Bank President Lee Stewart. "We started this 'Cleveland Helping Cleveland' drive over a decade ago knowing that it was a time that others may be in need, and the community has always come through and showed the heart that makes our city and county so special."

United Way agencies receiving the food assistance are the Harbor Safe House, Nancy's House, Signal Center, Hiwassee Mental Health Center, the Boys and Girls Clubs of Cleveland, and the American Red Cross.

Along with the food which was donated, over \$3,000 in cash was also donated. These funds will go to purchase food for those who cannot provide for themselves.

The food drive was conducted at the bank's three branches, and at several companies and schools. The main branch on Keith Street held a special event Friday, Nov. 13, where the companies brought their food and local residents also dropped off food and monetary donations.

The companies involved in this year's "Cleveland Helping Cleveland" food drive included Bender Realty, Cleveland Fire Department, Cleveland Family YMCA, Cleveland Utilities, Eaton Electrical, Manufacturers Chemicals, Pathway Press, Peyton's Southeastern, and Renfro Charleston.

The couponing group Time2Saveworkshops.com also promoted the event, and several of their fans donated items during the food drive.

Also, schools conducting food drives to help with this event included: Blue Springs Elementary School, Charleston Elementary School, the Goal Academy, Hopewell Elementary School, Michigan Avenue Elementary School, Walker Valley High School and Yates Primary School.

Stewart said that it is so gratifying to see how this event has grown each year, from the beginning when four companies joined with Southern Heritage Bank. He also said it is wonderful to see the schools get involved in this event each year.

Along with collecting food, Walker Valley High School also collects monetary donations each year. Rebecca Wood, WVHS National Honor Society advisor, said the school raised \$2,725 in cash for the food drive this year.

Special assistance during the event was again provided by the Cleveland Fire Department, as firefighters helped load the trailer at Southern Heritage Bank on the final day, and then helped unload the trailer at the United Way offices the following Monday. Firefighters who helped included Cody Hicks, T.J. Smith, Josh Keller, Rock Eulo, Kel Stansell, Rick Lesniewski, Ross Anderson, Hank Pate and Aaron Jones.

Ocoee River Transport helped again by providing the trailer to hold the food at the Southern Heritage Bank main office, and Steven Woods of Ocoee River Transport helped in unloading the food to be distributed to the United Way agencies.

"It's called 'Cleveland Helping Cleveland' because it is a community effort that brings in all this food and helps distribute it to those in need," Stewart said. "We appreciate all who participated in the event, and thank United Way for getting it to the agencies that provide assistance in our community each and every day."

Brenda Abel, United Way of Bradley County President and CEO, said the United Way appreciates Southern Heritage Bank being involved in this special event for the past 11 years, and thanks all who donated to help these agencies.

"These donations will help many in need in our community, and also help our agencies stock their pantries so they can utilize their funds to provide services to their clients," Abel explained. "Thanks to all who helped, and to Southern Heritage Bank for creating this event and coordinating it every year."

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