



Superintendent Glen E. Szymoniak

2845 Greensprings Drive • Klamath Falls, OR 97601

Phone 541-883-5000 • Fax 541-883-6677 • E-mail: szymoniakg@kcsd.k12.or.us

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Attachments: Two photos

2_Laura Nickerson, a Mazama teacher who is leading the school's Load the Boat: MHS Canned Food Drive Virtual Challenge, kicks off the two-week campaign with a video. The community is invited to "Load the Boat" with canned food for the local food bank. The Mazama Viking wooden boat will in the front parking lot for no-contact drop-off donations from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Donors are encouraged to make a video for social media (hashtag #LoadtheBoatMHS) challenging five other people to donate food during the campaign.

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Mazama challenges community to 'Load the Boat' for food bank

Mazama High School this week kicked off a food drive and a virtual social media challenge to help the local food bank fill its shelves for the holiday season.

The school, in partnership with its Sparrow Club, on Wednesday (Dec. 2) started the two-week campaign for the Klamath Lake Counties Food Bank. The "Load the Boat: MHS Canned Food Drive Virtual Challenge" hopes to leverage the power of social media to challenge everyone in the community to do their part.

Plans are for donors to drop off canned food items at the Viking's wooden boat, which will be in the school's front parking lot. At that point, they are asked to inspire others to donate as well.

"When someone donates food to the boat, we are asking them to make a quick video to virtually challenge five others to do the same," said Laura Nickerson, a Mazama teacher who is heading up the school's #LoadtheBoatMHS campaign.

Her hope is that campaign will spread beyond the school district and into the community. The virtual challenge uses the same playbook as the ALS ice bucket challenge that went viral several years ago.

Nickerson, during a kickoff video posted Wednesday morning, challenged KCS D Superintendent Glen Syzmoniak as well as other staff members throughout the district. Mazama Principal Michael Schaefer also plans to donate and post a challenge.

"This is an outstanding opportunity to create a sense of community while serving and challenging others to help during these challenging times," Schaefer said. "I continue to be amazed at the creativity, strength, and personal and professional excellence that the entire Viking community shows."

Szymoniak responded Wednesday afternoon, and will post a video that challenges the community to not just load the boat, but to sink it. "I want to encourage everyone who is able to participate and help out our local food bank," he said.

Every year, Mazama students volunteer to help the food bank with Supermarket Saturday and other events. However, those events couldn't happen this year because of Covid-19 restrictions, and the food bank is short on supplies heading into the holidays, Nickerson said.

The Sparrow Club also will host a drive-through donation day to encourage community members to join the effort. Donations will be accepted at the boat from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Check out the Mazama Vikings Facebook page to follow the progress and see the social media challenges to students and community members. For the kickoff video: <https://www.facebook.com/mazamavikings/videos/681059042595474>

