

Aurora area retired teachers help food pantries, nursing homes

Homework by Aurora-area retired teachers will benefit two local food pantries and six local nursing homes.

Donations by Aurora Area Retired Teachers Association members highlighted the group's first drive-thru meeting Tuesday (Oct. 6). The drive-thru luncheon at Gaslite Manor in Aurora was held due to the pandemic. AARTA suspended in-person bi-monthly luncheons when COVID-19 restrictions were announced in March.



AARTA President Dick Schindel, a retired East Aurora educator, said the drive-thru included distribution of 116 box lunches to members and friends, collection of 96 lap blankets handmade by members and sale of about 200 face masks made by members.



After the drive-thru, AARTA volunteers delivered blankets to nursing homes in Aurora and Batavia. Recipients were Jennings Terrace, Elmwood Terrace, Symphony of Orchard Valley and The Grove of Fox Valley, all in Aurora; and Batavia Rehabilitation

Center. Eva Balek of Aurora repeated as project coordinator.

According to Schindel, the event raised \$2,800 to be shared by Marie Wilkinson and Aurora Area Interfaith food pantries in Aurora. The total included \$1,035 in cash donations by AARTA members.

Schindel praised George Bozonelos, manager of Gaslite Manor and Lincoln Inn Banquets in Batavia, for his cooperation in preparing dinners.

AARTA members Linda Weiss, Marilyn Ruby and Eva Balek, who create luncheon centerpieces, made about 200 seasonal face masks for \$5 each to benefit the pantries.

Schindel explained the revised meeting format. "Reasons for this change in format included to maintain the safety of our members, offer members a chance to take a little excursion and continue our community outreach activities by helping each of our area food banks. We are still a caring, vital group," he said.

Founded in 1958 with 42 charter members, AARTA comprises 370 members from public and parochial schools in Aurora, Batavia and Kaneland.

Service projects include labor and cash donations to local food pantries, a \$1,500 scholarship to a local high school student planning to become a teacher, "Warm Fuzzies" blanket donations to senior centers, donations of school supplies to Aurora schools and other projects.

Contact Dick Schindel, AARTA president, at (630) 921-1307 or dickschindel@comcast.net for more information.

PHOTO (top right): Aurora Area Retired Teachers Association President Dick Schindel of Aurora, right, delivers a box dinner to Pat Patterson, Aurora, on Tuesday (Oct. 6) at Gaslite Manor in Aurora at AARTA's first drive-thru meeting due to pandemic precautions. Sales of 116 dinners helped raise \$1,400 each for two Aurora food pantries. (Al Benson photo)

PHOTO (bottom left): Aurora Area Retired Teachers Association members Tuesday (Oct. 6) collect about 100 handmade lap blankets for nursing homes in Aurora and Batavia. From left are AARTA President Dick Schindel, Aurora; Barb Zillgitt, Aurora; Eva Balek, Aurora; and Chari Sager, North Aurora. In an annual "Warm Fuzzies" project, blankets were collected at Gaslite Manor in AARTA's first drive-thru meeting due to pandemic precautions. (Al Benson photo)

PHOTO: (bottom right) Aurora Area Retired Teachers Association members Mary Ann Soszynski, left and Marilyn Ruby sell about 200 handmade face masks Tuesday (Oct. 6) to benefit two Aurora food pantries. AARTA's held its first drive-thru meeting at Gaslite Manor in Aurora due to pandemic precautions. (Al Benson photo)