

## Hillside Health employees compete and the food bank wins

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### Submitted article

During the holidays Hillside Health Center employees continued their tradition of competing with each other to see who could donate the most to the Ukiah Food Bank, culminating in a total of more than 1,300 food items donated between mid-December and mid-January.

Employees form teams, mostly along department lines, and a friendly competition drives up donations. This year's winning team hesitated to participate because they were so busy; however, thanks to a dedicated midwife, her children, and a Radio Flyer wagon, the Care for Her Department rallied to donate almost 500 food items.

Certified Nurse Midwife Cayo Alba is relatively new to Hillside Health Center, but not to Mendocino County. When she heard about the employee food drive, she immediately donated a few food items and signed up her department. She then took her two young children out with their Radio Flyer wagon and they went door to door in their neighborhood, asking for donations.

Alba also worked a shift in her parents' restaurant during a busy holiday time and told patrons that all her earnings that evening were going toward purchasing food for the Ukiah Food Bank. Her parents offered to pay Alba for her work, which she declined in favor of a donation to the food bank.

Alba's actions inspired her colleagues at Care for Her. This close-knit group with a can-do spirit embraced Alba's contagious enthusiasm, and donations began pouring in.

To encourage participation each year, Hillside Health Center's CEO Linnea Hunter offers a catered lunch for the winning department. The Care for Her team instead requested that the money for the lunch also be donated to the food bank. That, in turn, inspired Hunter to make a personal financial donation, so in addition to the 1,300-plus food items, Hillside Health Center also donated \$300 in cash.

The runners up in the food drive competition also had impressive results: Administration came in second and the Environmental Services team came in third. The true winners, of course, were the people served by the Ukiah Food Bank.

Ukiah Food Bank Coordinator Chris Selby said, "I am extremely grateful and so are the volunteers and patrons who use the food bank. Without community leaders like Care for Her and Hillside Health Center, Americorps, and all their staff, we would not be able to operate the food bank as we do. Thank you." After which, he did a little jig that he termed, "the happy dance."

Information courtesy of Mendocino Community Health Clinic