

Voc Tech students collect over \$2,000 in supplies for homeless



Shelley Corriea educating Students Victoria Duverge and Delana Baldwin.

Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School students from the SKILLS USA program held a diaper, sheets, and toiletries collection drive as part of the community service contest project designed to bring awareness to the growing number of homeless families in New Bedford. In total, they collected \$2,000.00 worth of products including 5,000 individual bars of soap.

The students identified a need within the family homeless shelter Harbour House on Shawmut Avenue in New Bedford. In an effort to get folks back on their feet the shelter provides diapers, sheets, and toiletries for men, women and children. The students felt it was important to help them with this kind of transitional assistance.



Students Victoria Duverge and Delana Baldwin making a delivery.

To date the students have appeared on WBSM with Phil Paleologos to kick off the drive, and have collected items at Our Lady of Assumption Church, and are in the process of a letter writing campaign to a number of retailers, as well as already secured a spot for donations at Our Sisters School in New Bedford. The students extended the drive through April 17, 2014 in order to offer the students and faculty an opportunity to help. They already collected 6000 bars of soap from an organization in Fall River who heard about our efforts and a load of items thanks to the generosity of the parishioners at St. Julie's.

The community service competition evaluates local chapter activities that benefit the community. Skills USA chapters present their best community service project for the year. Contestants are evaluated on a notebook which reports their chapter's community service project and on a live presentation, which is given to a panel of three judges in May at the Skills USA State Competition in .

Facts About Homelessness and Poverty

- Families comprise nearly 40% of all who are homeless.
- According to the 2010 US conference of Mayors report, family homelessness increased by 9%.
- 68% of the cities reporting in the 2010 Mayor's Report, had to turn away homeless families with children because of a lack of available shelter beds.
- Among families who are homeless with children, the majority cited loss of a jobs as the cause, followed by the lack of affordable housing, poverty, low-paying jobs and domestic violence.
- 42% of homeless children are under the age of 6.
- A child born into poverty every 33 seconds.
- Families with children comprise one of the fastest-growing segments of the homeless population today.
- More than 15% of Americans live in poverty, including one in five children (22%), the highest rate in the industrialized world.
- Almost 60% of Americans will spend at least one year below the poverty line at some point between ages 25 and 75.
- There is no city or county anywhere in the United States where a worker making the minimum wage can afford a fair market rate one-bedroom apartment.
- The cost of rent and utilities for a typical two-bedroom apartment increased 41% from 2000 to 2009.
- Among the 51 states (this includes Puerto Rico), 38 reported an increase in the fair market rent between 2010 and 2011.
- A majority of persons identified as homeless were staying in emergency shelters or transitional housing, but 38% were unsheltered, living on the streets, or in cars, abandoned buildings, or other places not intended for human habitation.