

## **Children's Alliance ensures a bountiful Thanksgiving**

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<http://www.davisenterprise.com/local-news/childrens-alliance-provides-thanksgiving-cheer-to-hundreds-of-families/>

More than 500 needy families will enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner complete with a turkey and all the trimmings thanks to the Yolo County Children's Alliance, which distributed meals along with new coats, toys and blankets during its annual Community Giveaway Day on Saturday.

The ninth annual event, held at Westfield Village Elementary School in West Sacramento, was the largest yet for the Children's Alliance, which last year served 400 families.

Some 59 families would have been turned away this year but for the Yolo Food Bank's ability to come up with additional meals for everyone on the waiting list, said Katie Villegas, executive director of the Children's Alliance.

About \$20,000 in donations covered the cost of all the food, coats and toys while Children's Alliance staff, local businesses and organizations and dozens of high school students provided all the needed labor for set-up on Friday and the event on Saturday.

Students from River City and Christian Brothers high schools were on hand Friday to help set up tables, organize toys and sort coats and blankets ahead of Saturday's event.

Doors would open at 8 a.m. on Saturday, but families would have begun lining up as early as 2 a.m., Villegas said.

All of the families signed up for the event through the Children's Alliance's Family Resource Center in West Sacramento and this year a sizable portion of the families included seniors and veterans, she said.

The seeds for the annual giveaway were planted nine years ago by Villegas' son, Vince, when he was 10 years old and adopted a West Sacramento family through a local nonprofit.

"He raised all the money for everything himself, mowing lawns," his mom said, and he was stunned to learn the family of five he'd adopted were living in a cramped one-bedroom apartment.

The following year, Villegas began working at the Yolo Children's Alliance and helped organize its first community giveaway, which that year served about 100 families.

Since then, the event has grown and now includes a separate community giveaway in Clarksburg, which served about 50 families on Friday, Villegas said.