

ASI Newsletter

JANUARY 1ST, 2024

UPDATES ON DRIVES,
GOALS, AND MORE!

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1st Newsletter of the ASI!

The Andover Service Initiative has decided to kickstart the new year with its first ever newsletter, which serves to review our work in 2023 and outline our steps forward into 2024.

Our newsletters from now on will not happen on a timely basis but will rather depend on the occasion at hand. We hope that these newsletters can inform all of you about the work of our organization as well as allow us to keep track of ASI's progress.

Happy reading! :)

-Newsletter Team

ARTICLES



RECENT FOOD DRIVE FINDS GREAT SUCCESS

Andover Service Initiative conducted a food drive across the town of Andover during the 2023 winter season. Coordinators from different schools such as Phillips Academy and Andover High School pitched in to create posters and donation boxes.



WHAT IS FOOD INSECURITY?

Food insecurity is one of the most pressing systemic issues in today's society, often being out of one's control. Read more to discover its repercussions and what we can do to mitigate it,



OUR GOALS FOR THE NEW YEAR

Andover Service Initiative has created a roadmap so that we can maximize our community efforts while balancing our schedule. The roadmap includes a set of goals, one for each season of 2024. (Winter/Spring, Summer, and Fall)

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Do you want to write for our newsletter? If so, contact andoverserviceinitiative@gmail.com.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Recent food drive finds great success

Jasjit Hargun

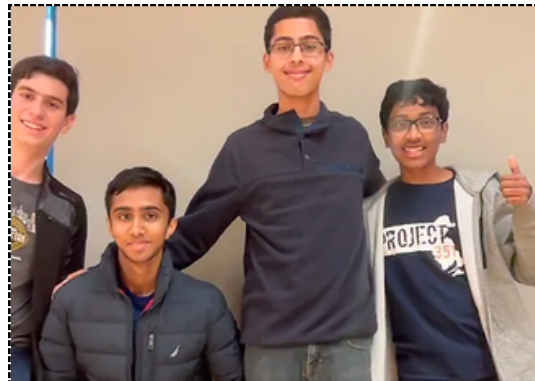
From November 27th to December 13th, a food drive was run across the town of Andover in Andover High School, Wood Hill Middle School, and Phillips Academy Andover. This drive was in collaboration with Project 351, a non-profit organization that aims to eradicate hunger in all of Massachusetts's 351 municipalities. The drive raised 236 pounds of food and donated it to two food pantries in Lawrence: Bread and Roses and the Merrimack Valley Food Bank.

The drive was organized by Nathan Ramani, a freshman at Phillips Academy and Andover ambassador of Project 351. He assembled leadership teams composed of his friends in each of the three schools. This strategy decreased the burden on Nathan, and also allowed everyone to contribute their own ideas to running the food drive. For example, an infographic video was created to detail the purposes of the drive and how everyone could contribute.

Project 351, as mentioned above, is an organization that strives to end hunger across the entirety of Massachusetts. They do this by organizing food drives, clothing drives, and other charitable events. However, they realize that they won't be able to end hunger by themselves. So, all of the events that Project 351 organizes are also used to teach people generosity and how to run drives of their own.

Project 351 organizes its members into three groups: staff, ambassadors, and alumni. The staff are adults who run the organization and create the service events that the other two groups participate in. The ambassadors are eighth graders who participate in the events and run drives with Project 351 in their local areas. These ambassadors are the ones that Project 351 aims to teach, as they are old enough to run community service events, but young enough that they still have open minds and plenty of time to make an impact. After one year, ambassadors graduate and become alumni. These alumni are still able to help Project 351 and are sometimes expected to teach the ambassadors lessons or give advice on how to run effective drives.

However, it's not just ambassadors and alumni that can help. Although Nathan organized the team, everyone had their own reasons to help. Some of these included the feeling of giving back, how people's faces light up when receiving supplies,



while others were inspired by those who gave back before them. Everyone had their own reason, but we all came together because of this noble cause.

This drive alleviated pressure on the two food banks. It especially helped Bread and Roses, which had a 1000% increase in demand this year. With many widespread causes, such as the housing crisis and high inflation levels, more people this year have needed help than ever before. This drive, along with many other holiday season drives, are helping to keep everyone fed.

The drive also had another key role: it was the first event organized by the Andover Service Initiative. With this first project, we learned what to do and what to avoid for the future. Not only that, it brought us together as a team, and was the first step in establishing a foundation for all of our future projects.

Of course, we aren't the only ones who can do things like this. Anyone, no matter where they are, can work to improve the lives of those around them. It doesn't have to be a food drive, it can be anything from a large community-changing project to cleaning the trails on a local nature reserve. What matters most is that people are making an effort. This effort goes on to inspire others to also put in effort, and soon, we're all working together on one goal: to end suffering, whether it be in our local communities or across the globe. We hope that we can be the ones to inspire you to make a change.



Images credit: Nathan Ramani

GOALS/PROGRESS

Our Goals for the New Year

Saketh Lingisetty

As much as we enjoy dedicating our time towards the work of Andover Service Initiative, there are some personal barriers preventing us from consistently hosting substantial service events every month. So, Andover Service Initiative has created a timeline to help us contribute to the work of ASI while steadily developing its organization. The three main parts that constitute this plan include: building our organization, preparing for the 2024 Fall season, and making an effective impact in the Fall of 2024. By creating a roadmap for our progress, we can host food drives and other community efforts more efficiently.

For the beginning of 2024 up until Spring, our efforts will focus on building a foundation. With an active newspaper, Discord server, and other modes of communication, we can effectively reach out to the public and organize volunteers into certain jobs or positions. Our recent food drive during the Fall of 2023 utilized a structure similar to this, composed of two teams: Poster Design and Spread the Word (STW). Volunteers were able to choose whichever team they were most familiar with, leading to a successful first food drive. Currently, our tasks include building our website, planning the next issue of the ASI newsletter, informing the public about our community events, and many more to come. In the future, we aim to expand our team and assign more independent tasks to our members depending on their interests.

For the summer of 2024, our organization is looking towards smaller and more frequent service projects. That way, we can make use of our Summer break and obtain a sense of how we can find more success during the 2024-2025 school year. During summer break, we also aim to assess the progress we made as a growing organization through smaller community efforts, such as infographic videos and gratitude projects. Similar to our recent food drive, each of these projects will allow us to learn about what aspects of our organization we may have to improve in preparation for the fall of 2024.

So why is this effective?

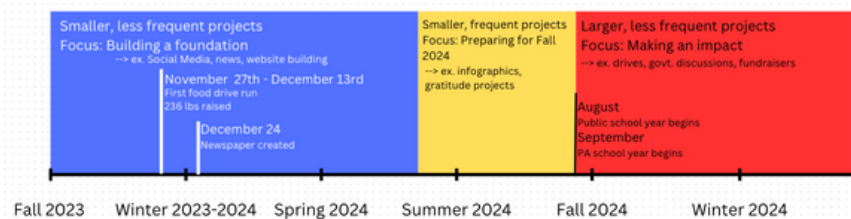
Finally, the fall of 2024 not only marks a new school year, but the culmination of our progress into larger, less frequent projects that help make great leaps towards fulfilling our mission. These projects include food and clothing drives, fundraisers, and discussions with Andover's government over our current policies. Our benchmark for conducting these types of events has to meet three types of criteria: a large population of active volunteers, knowledge about advertising community events, and an effective job structure. Not only will each drive during this season span over more than 2 weeks, but they will also collect donations from the entire town of Andover.

Image credit: Effective Experiments



As our organization continues to develop, we have to set reasonable milestones that not only track our success but strengthen our confidence to foray into larger, more demanding community service events. We recognize that the mission of Andover Service Initiative, ending suffering, is difficult to fulfill in the long run, so our goals for 2024 can maximize our efforts towards this objective while utilizing our concurrent resources.

However, this plan won't be possible without many more volunteers who are willing to support us in developing this organization. By joining Andover Service Initiative, all of us can give a helping hand that propagates our mission: to make an everlasting positive impact on the less fortunate.



WHAT IS FOOD INSECURITY?

BY SHRINAATH ANANDAKUMAR

Recently, Project 351 held a food drive from November 27th to December 13th, and all of the food donated helped those struggling with food insecurity. But what is food insecurity, and what does it have to do with our drive?

Well, food insecurity is the condition of not having access to sufficient food to meet one's basic needs. This condition affects 44 million people in the US, and over 900 million people worldwide. Food insecurity is primarily caused by people who are unable to afford food or those who don't have a job. Additionally, a lack of affordable housing is a root cause because people who pay for a place to live might not have enough money left over for food. Many people with food insecurity as a result can experience malnutrition, poor physical and mental health, and poor well-being. People who experience food insecurity could even struggle with school/work.

Other causes of food insecurity include economic turmoil, climate change, and wars, which can severely impair people's ability to receive adequate food to feed themselves and their family. Economic turmoil, or a shift in the economy, can have an effect on those who are employed and how they can get affordable, nutritious food. Climate change can affect agriculture, which can also lead to food insecurity. Finally, wars and conflicts, such as the recent ones going on in the world, affect many innocent civilians who may have to leave their home and seek shelter. As a result, the people from these countries will need aid to keep them food secure.

This condition of food insecurity is what our drive is trying to solve. Our drive to help both the Bread and Roses food pantry and the Merrimack Valley Food Bank contributes to those without access to sufficient food. We raised over 236 lbs of food, more than \$300 in donations, and helped 100+ families this winter. But this goes beyond just food insecurity. There are also many other problems in our world.

Food insecurity is not just based on one's own mistakes, but is a systemic problem influencing the livelihoods of many people. This positive change that can help many people goes beyond just one town, but can influence many other areas. That is why we hope that many more volunteers will join to help commit to the Andover Service Initiative and empower us to achieve our mission. Small things can make a huge impact on our world, and the effort you put in helps to sustain many people who are struggling for their basic needs. So please help us in any way you can to help end suffering. Together, we can be the ones to inspire hope and change.



Image credit: University of Maryland

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