

SOULS HARBOUR

Mission to feed 800 people for Thanksgiving

Donations, volunteers make dinner

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LEADER-POST

Volunteers spent Friday cutting 350 pounds of potatoes and cooking 28 turkeys for Souls Harbour Rescue Mission's Thanksgiving dinner.

Today, at the Dean Smith Youth Centre, the hard work of volunteers like Nichele Procyshyn will be enjoyed by Regina's needy.

Sitting in the empty dining area, Procyshyn, a 17-year-old nursing student at Saskatchewan Polytechnic, reflected on her experience of being able to help

those less fortunate.

"I have a big family and we're very family-oriented. Seeing this makes me appreciate everything I have and everything my parents do for me. I enjoy working here," Procyshyn said.

She said serving has been an eye-opening experience that makes her think twice about being a picky eater.

As part of the nursing program's volunteer component, she has worked five shifts at Souls Harbour within the past two and a half weeks.

Having never been around the soup kitchen as a holiday approach, she was surprised by the community's generosity.

"It's nice to know that everybody contributes so much and everything is donated," Procyshyn said Friday. "Today we got so many

pies. People put it on the radio and so many pies show up — like, 36 pies at once. It's crazy to see what the community does for everyone."

Rebecca Cochrane, Souls Harbour's director of development and programs, said the Thanksgiving meal wouldn't be possible without volunteers like Procyshyn or the other 75 who will help serve food.

Last year, more than 500 people showed up for the holiday meal. This year, they've prepared enough food for 800.

Cochrane said the annual free Thanksgiving meal fills two different needs — not just the most obvious one.

"It's as much about community as it is about feeding a physical hunger. It's as much about feeding that spiritual and emotional hunger that we have for commu-

nity and camaraderie at holiday time," Cochrane said.

Cochrane said for many of Souls Harbour's guests, the holiday meals become tradition, even if they're not in the same level of need anymore.

"We have definitely seen that people who have moved on in their lives, but come back because this is important to them to celebrate with those that may not have other people," Cochrane said.

Deanna Aubichon, food program supervisor, who was responsible for preparing enough food to feed 800 people, said that in six short months the people who use Souls Harbour have become her family.

"It makes me happy when they're eating," Aubichon said.

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DON HEALY/Leader-Post

Volunteer Nichele Procyshyn prepares potatoes on Friday as part of a Thanksgiving meal being offered Saturday at Souls Harbour Rescue Mission for Regina's needy.