



ST. JOSEPH NEWS-PRESS ONLINE

Yours For Life.



Missouri Western State College student Jayna Shirley, right, talks with Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity member Brandon Tiller while fraternity members try to raise money and awareness for homeless and hunger issues in front of Hy-Vee. Josh Wilson, a TKE alumnus, left, looks for patrons at Hy-Vee to hand out literature. (TODD WEDDLE/St. Joseph News-Press)

Fraternity raises funds for food bank

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By **JIMMY MYERS**, jimmym@npgco.com

Justin Aker knows what living without is about. He spent a year living out of his car while he was still a high-school student.

Now a sophomore at Missouri Western State College, Mr. Aker and his brothers in the Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity are helping people who have found themselves in a similar situation.

For 48-plus hours, the men of TKE resided in makeshift homes in front of Hy-Vee this week, raising money, awareness and taking food donations for America's Second Harvest of Greater St. Joseph and Open Door Food Kitchen.

They were about \$500 short of the \$2,000 goal Wednesday morning, so they extended the deadline.

"If we don't reach the goal tonight, I'll come back and stay," a sleep-deprived Mr. Aker said. "I fully believe in this. I actually lived in my car for a year. So I know exactly what it's like to need this."

The fraternity, which has 20 active members, had 100 percent participation in the philanthropic event. With the threat of rain in the forecast, fraternity member Jeremy Funk said somebody was looking out for them as well.

"We figured 48 hours sleeping outside of Hy-Vee in the early spring would probably be more than enough," Mr. Funk said. "You can't predict the weather. We're very lucky."

Kathy Younger, deputy director at Second Harvest, said Western's participation in events to benefit Second Harvest is exceptional.

"I feel like we've been adopted by them, and because of that we're able to feed more people," she said. "It's so refreshing to know that young people are getting as involved as they are to help the community."

Ms. Younger said the students aren't donating their time to Second Harvest but to the people who are at risk of going hungry.

"We can't do this all by ourselves," Ms. Younger said. "We have to have them."

Mr. Aker said the event was more than just asking for donations. To combat boredom, he and his brothers played football and "made fun of each other" into the wee hours of the morning. However, he said the result of their work is compensation for the lack of sleep.

"Just knowing that I'm going to help somebody that can't afford to eat," he said, "it's worth it."

Ms. Younger said \$2,000 equals about 1,200 pounds of food. To make a donation to Second Harvest, call 364-4442. To make a donation to Open Door Food Kitchen, call 364-1085.

For more information about TKE at Missouri Western, visit online at www.mwsc.edu/orgs/tke.

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