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Students use cans to build castles and feed the hungry

Red Hill Lutheran students collect 2,000 cans for Orange County Rescue Mission

By **ELYSSE JAMES AND ERIKA CHAVEZ**

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Red Hill Lutheran School students transformed their playground with more than 2,000 cans of food on Friday morning during the school's Canned Castle Building Contest.

Students in preschool to eighth grade brought canned goods to the school at Red Hill Avenue near Irvine Boulevard to donate to the Orange County Rescue Mission.

Seventh-grader Megan Charity got a donation of 400 cans from Albertsons after she called and explained the school event. She helped the 7th grade class of 26 students win the grade-level competition for most cans donated.

Students collected 3,817 pounds of food, according to Lori Browne, admissions director, enough to feed 300 hungry families

The Orange County Rescue Mission and its spin-off Village of Hope have struggled with low food supplies and a decrease in donations, even as demand for services increases in tandem with the local unemployment rate.

"We knew there was a need close to home affecting a lot of families right here in our community," Browne said. "The results were above and beyond our expectations."

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Kindergarteners Danny Smith, Connor Owens and Brady Ashworth work together to build their castle on Friday at Red Hill Lutheran School in Tustin.

COURTESY OF LORI BROWNE, RED HILL LUTHERAN SCHOOL