

Brighton Rotarians are linked to food cupboard

The group has volunteered their hands and their backs to Foodlink for more than a decade

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BRIGHTON — Bill Moehle remembers many unusual trips the Brighton Rotary Club has made to Foodlink over the years.

There was one trip recently when club members were asked to go through cereal boxes and remove toys that had been deemed dangerous.

Then there was another trip a few years ago when they had to dig through 1,000-pound bins of raw, unwashed potatoes and sort them into 10-pound bags.

"Talk about 'getting your hands dirty,'" said Moehle, a past president of the club, "boy, did we get our hands dirty."

Despite some messy work, the club has maintained a hearty relationship with Foodlink, one that has lasted more than 10 years, Moehle said.

The Brighton Rotarians have been volunteering at Foodlink for about as long as any other nonprofit group, said Foodlink volunteer coordinator John Baldanza.

That fact is "pretty remarkable," Moehle said, "because (Foodlink does) get help from a lot of different organizations. We're really proud of that."

Almost every time the Brighton Rotarians come to visit, they are given a new job to do, Baldanza said. "I'm guessing just about any project we've come up with, they've done once or twice," he said.

Charles Krusenstjerna, the club's president, said the Rotarians return to Foodlink every year because they

recognize a need.

Last year, they saw that need grow as the economy really began to sag, so they decided to add a second trip to Foodlink. They now visit Foodlink's Rochester ware-

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house during every summer and winter holiday season.

The club also gives Foodlink a

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donation of \$1,000 every year, Moehle said.

"The demands are really extraordinary for a group like theirs," he said. "We're really glad to be able to support them."

In addition to their work at Foodlink, the Rotarians also take part in many other community service projects, including ringing bells for the Salvation Army and volunteering with Camp Haccamo and Heritage Christian Services.

In addition, the club — which has 37 members — also recently helped sponsor a photography program for schoolchildren in an area of Turkey near Istanbul.

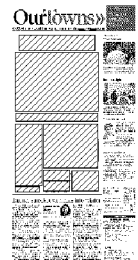
Still their trips to Foodlink are something special.

"The visit to Foodlink or two visits to Foodlink are among the first things that get slotted into the calendar," said Krusenstjerna.

On each trip, about 25 club members meet at Foodlink, have dinner and then get to work for about two hours.

"There's a camaraderie about that evening ..." said Krusenstjerna, noting that many family members and friends come along for the trip. "It's more than just a Brighton Rotary meeting night. It's more an extended community work session." □

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KATE MELTON

Foodlink volunteer coordinator John Baldanza, right, explains the rules for sorting food to a group of volunteers from the Brighton Rotary Club. The club visits the warehouse every summer and winter holiday season.



KATE MELTON

Shubhangi Gandhi, left, with husband Mohamad Razak and daughter Shreya Razak, 13, were among the group of Brighton Rotarians who volunteered recently to sort food at Foodlink.