

## **Belleair teens recognized for helping less fortunate**

*By BRIAN GOFF, TBN Correspondent*



The Belleair Teen Council won a Florida League of Cities award for their project called “Socksgiving.”  
Photo courtesy of the TOWN OF BELLEAIR

BELLEAIR – Last fall members of Belleair’s Teen Council decided to collect new pairs of socks to help those in need. They hoped to make a small difference in the lives of those they helped.

It turns out they made a big difference and won an award for their efforts.

It was recently announced that the group won the 2018 Youth Council Community Service Project Award presented by the Florida League of Cities organization. They won first place among such groups who helped throughout the state.

The official name of the project was “Socksgiving.” It was the brainchild of Rachel Hobbs, Belleair’s special events coordinator and the Teen Council liaison.

“During the summer I did some research nationwide about teen councils and what they did and I discovered this was bring done and I thought it would be cool to do during the winter months,” she said.

So, Hobbs brought the idea to the Teen Council, who took it on. It became their main project for the year and turned out to be more successful than anyone imagined.

“We set a goal for 500 pairs of socks,” said Hobbs. “We ended up with more than 700 pairs of all sizes.”

Collecting that many pairs of new socks turned into a community effort.

The Belleair Community Foundation helped as did any number of residents who donated socks in the big bins in the foyer of the recreation center.

The teens themselves did the bulk of the work by getting socks from family, friends and neighbors. No money exchanged hands, just socks.

Teen Council Vice President Jennifer Spencer was quoted in the town news release saying how important their project was.

“The people who benefited from our Socksgiving drive have a lot to worry about especially during the holiday season,” she said. “Even though it is something as simple as clean socks I feel it is important for us to help relieve the struggles of people in need in our community by any means possible.”

The socks were given to two charities, RCS (Religious Community Services) and Hands Across the Bay. Both charities help people in need and both stress the need to help victims of domestic violence.

Belleair Rec’s Hobbs said the project exceeded her expectations – by a lot.

“It 100 percent exceeded my expectations,” she said. “What a nice way to give back to the community; it was a nice gift. It was exciting to see all those socks come in. We filled those two really big bins. It exceeded my expectations 100 percent, it was really cool.”

The Belleair Teen Council is made up of 31 teenagers from age 13 to 18 years of age. They are all committed to making a difference in their community and by all accounts they fulfilled their commitment.

In August, they will formally be given their award at the Florida League of Cities’ annual conference. They will not only receive a trophy but also money to help in future projects.

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