**WUES PTO Souper Bowl of Caring**

Contact Name:  Olivia Benitez, WUES PTO VP Service

Email: oliviajbenitez@icloud.com

Group Name: WUES PTO

Address: 3756 University Blvd, Houston, TX 77005

**How did you hear of the Souper Bowl of Caring?**

The West University PTO sponsors 3 to 4 service projects during each school year, under the leadership of the PTO Vice President, Service. WUES has been participating in the Souper Bowl of Caring since 2007. It has been our only annual service project and is a favorite of the faculty, students and families.

**Why did you choose to join the Souper Bowl of Caring team?**

We are blessed to be part of such a generous community. The WUES PTO feels it is important to provide our students with opportunities to learn about community service and the responsibility of giving back. The Souper Bowl of Caring is a well-run organization with an amazing start up story. It lets children know that a small idea can turn into a major event that can positively impact the lives of many.

**What does your group do to participate in the Souper Bowl of Caring movement?**

Each year, WUES dedicates the week before the Super Bowl to a Souper Bowl of Caring Collection Week at our school. All students are encouraged to bring in donations, which are collected at the classroom door. A parent volunteer then brings the classroom donation to a central location where the donation is weighed and sorted. The classroom total donation (in weight) is recorded daily. Each day the classroom totals are sent to the staff and parents and the class with the highest weight donation is recognized on the morning announcements. In an effort to collect “most needed” items we conduct a Protein Challenge. Points are awarded for each jar of nut butter and can of meat. The class with the most Protein Points is also recognized. At the end of the week, the class with the highest weight donation is declared the “WUES Souper Bowl of Caring Champion” and the class with the most Protein Points is declared the “WUES Most Valuable Player”.

We have an amazing parent volunteer group and custodial staff that help sort and move all of the food collected. It is definitely a team effort. The students generally bring the class donation to the general collection/sorting area on Friday. The atmosphere is very festive – it is exciting for the students to see such a large quantity of food in one location and actually participate in the giving process. It is also such a blessing that they are able to see and feel the excitement of participating in community service.

**What have you found is most successful for raising cash and food items?**

Competition! The students want to be recognized as the class donating the most food!

**Was there any particularly meaningful or moving story from your collection you would like to share?**

We have so many wonderful stories…

* children using their own money to purchase food items for donation
* children walking up and down their blocks to collect donations from neighbors
* parents who donate truckloads of food because they benefited from the Houston Food Bank or similar organization as a child
* Rice University generously sends volunteer athletes to help move and sort our large collection on the Friday of donation week. It is a wonderful opportunity for our elementary students to see college students participating in community service!
* Using a formula provided by the Houston Food Bank, we convert pounds of food collected into “meals provided” and create a bulletin board so students can see the number of people they are serving.

It is so moving every year to see students and families graciously and joyfully buying as much food as they can to donate to the Souper Bowl of Caring effort at WUES. We have families bringing in wagonloads, dollies full, carloads, truckloads, and trailers full of food donations. It currently takes 2 tractor-trailer semi trucks to move all of the food our elementary school collects in one week!

**Tell us a little about where you donate your collection.**

WUES PTO Souper Bowl of Caring benefits the incredible Houston Food Bank. The Houston Food Bank is America’s largest food bank in distribution to its network of 600 hunger relief charities in 18 southeast Texas counties. The Houston Food Bank provides 83 million nutritious meals to food pantries, soup kitchens, senior centers and other agencies, feeding 800,000 people each year.

**WUES PTO Souper Bowl of Caring Participation Record**

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| Year | Pounds collected | SBOC School Collector Rank |
| 2019 | 46,639 | 1 |
| 2018 | 36,436 | 1 (I believe) |
| 2017 | 57,320 | 1 |
| 2016 | 35,596 | 2 |
| 2015 | 38,596 | 1 |
| 2014 | 30,908 | 2 |
| 2013 | 28,504 | 1 |
| 2012 | 28,145 | 3 |
| 2011 | 12,498 | 2 |
| 2010 | 14,708 | 9 |
| 2009 | 5,244 |  |
| 2008 | 4,213 |  |
| 2007 | 5,206 |  |