



News Release

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NMCC “Graduation: Can Due” project generates additional \$7,500 + to stock County food pantries

Aroostook County - A month-long effort by the graduating class of Northern Maine Community College has generated an additional \$7,500 in cash and food donations for Aroostook County food pantries. That amount is above and beyond the initial two tons of food donated to Catholic Charities Maine at the beginning of May by the NMCC Student Senate.

Recent graduates, current students and NMCC officials today presented a check for \$7,500 to representatives from the “Feed The County” initiative, an ongoing food drive for the Catholic Charities Home Supplies and Food Bank, co-sponsored by WAGM-TV and Aroostook Savings and Loan. The funds represent matching dollars for the NMCC effort from a private donor who contributed to the Maine Community College System with the intent of adding to the donations of each of the campuses statewide.

The effort, known as “Graduation: Can Due,” was undertaken in response to growing unemployment and a dramatic increase in demand for food assistance in all parts of the state. The initiative was designed as a graduation present from MCCS students to the larger community in recognition of the support the students have received from the people of Maine in a difficult economy.

Altogether, through “Graduation: Can Due,” student senates at the seven community colleges have donated a total of \$100,000 in food and funds to over 45 Maine food relief agencies that serve people across the state.

In northern Maine, that effort got underway in earnest on May 5 as representatives from the NMCC Student Senate donated one ton – or two thousand pounds – of canned food and dry goods to the Catholic Charities Maine on behalf of the NMCC Class of 2009. The food was purchased by Catholic Charities from the Good Shepherd Food Bank in Auburn through a donation made by the student government body at NMCC on behalf of the graduating class, which numbered 212 students.

The Catholic Charities Home Supplies and Food Bank in Caribou serves as a food distribution center for 24 food pantries from Sherman in southern Aroostook to Allagash in the St. John Valley. Over 33,200 people utilize the two dozen local food pantries.

“This is just incredible,” said Dixie Shaw, Catholic Charities program director in Aroostook County. “The ‘Graduation: Can Due’ project, and what the Northern Maine Community College campus and the local community have accomplished through this impressive effort will make such a difference here in Northern Maine. It is especially true at this time of year when donations tend to be slower than during the holiday season and winter months when folks are more likely to give. It is also especially helpful as we near the end of our fiscal year in September and funds get tighter.”

Since the NMCC Student Senate launched the northern Maine “Graduation: Can Due” initiative in early May, College students, employees and community members have donated both cash and an additional 200 pounds of non-perishable food items through a region-wide food drive.

“Giving back to the local community is part of the fabric of the NMCC campus,” said NMCC President Tim Crowley. “Our student body has yet again done a wonderful job of energizing our campus community and the region to help our County friends and neighbors in need.”

“This was a great way to give back to the community,” said Aaron Conroy, NMCC Student Senate president and a diesel hydraulics technology student from Presque Isle, who graduated on May 16. “People from throughout the area support what we do here at NMCC every day.”

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Northern Maine Community College (left to right) President Tim Crowley, Dean of Students William Egeler, Student Brittany Hewitt of Presque Isle and Student Senate Advisor Dennis Albert present a check for \$7,500 to Catholic Charities Program Director in Aroostook County Dixie Shaw.