

Local charities make donating easy

KAITLYN LATHROP

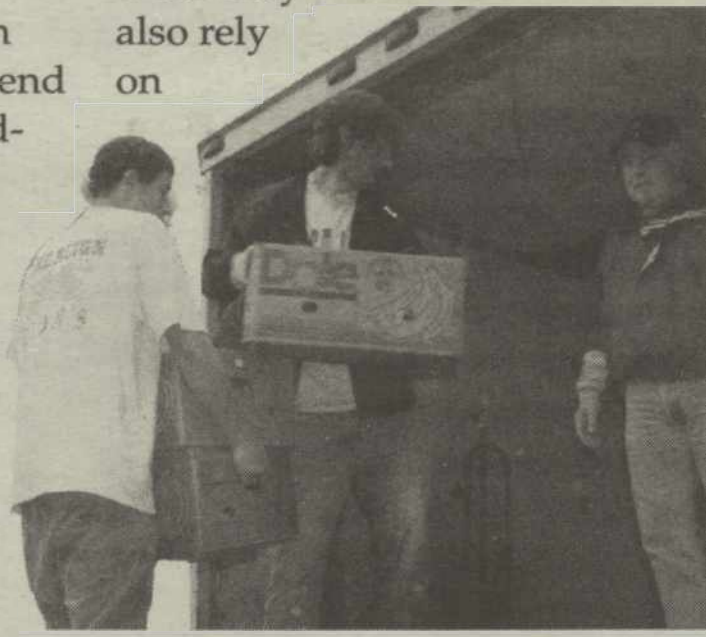
Contributing Writer

As soon as the holiday season rolls around, Americans open their hearts and wallets. Between November and December, millions of dollars are donated for things like food, clothing and toys. These donations benefit all kinds of people: the homeless, low-income families, foster children, sick/hospitalized children and adults. Donations extend to impoverished and third-world countries. A can of beans or jug of water would go unappreciated by many of us, but could save the life of a starving child.

We say that Thanksgiving and Christmas are the times we should count our blessings and be thankful. Unfortunately, our donations often end when the holidays are over. The need for things such as food and clothing don't. What happens in, say, early February when the canned food starts to run dry and there aren't any more clothes to give away?

According to Jean Kempe-Ware, director of public relations for the Oregon Food Bank (oregonfoodbank.org), "Hunger is a problem all year round.

We depend heavily on holidays to provide much of our donations. Hunger is especially hard on families, with children being 37% of people who depend on us. Some may think the parents are being lazy and not finding work, but at least one parent is working 47% of the time. Often, there just isn't enough money. A parent being disabled and unable to work may also rely on



Jacob Fogle, junior, and Justin McKee, freshman, load boxes of food collected during the ASB sponsored food drive. This is one of many opportunities students and staff have to help others.

Photo by Malia Chong

our emergency food supplies."

Fortunately, many local businesses like Albertsons grocery store collect donations year round.

They have as many as three drives between January and October, and usually collect at least 1,000 lbs. of food.

Hunger isn't the only problem local charities, one

being Sleep Country USA, are fighting. Many foster children may have to go without things like school supplies and winter coats. Sleep Country holds a coat drive to provide them with warm winter coats, usually once in November and once in February.

Contributing to charities during the holidays is great, but we need to do more.

There are so many ways to support those in need. Dropping off canned food, serving at a soup kitchen, buying a needy child a desired present, or going online to contribute money are all ways we can give. Use the search engine website goodsearch.com to donate money to your favorite charity.

We may not realize it, but we benefit almost as much as those we help. Studies show that people who volunteer have higher self esteem, are more appreciative of what they have, and have more compassion toward others. Children who volunteer benefit the most. Something as simple as picking up trash in the park or helping serve food at a soup kitchen can instill values like responsibility, respect and appreciation.

Share your good fortune. Donate this month, next month, in February,

Thanksgiving filled with turkey, but little thanks

KAITLYN RAGAN

Staff Reporter

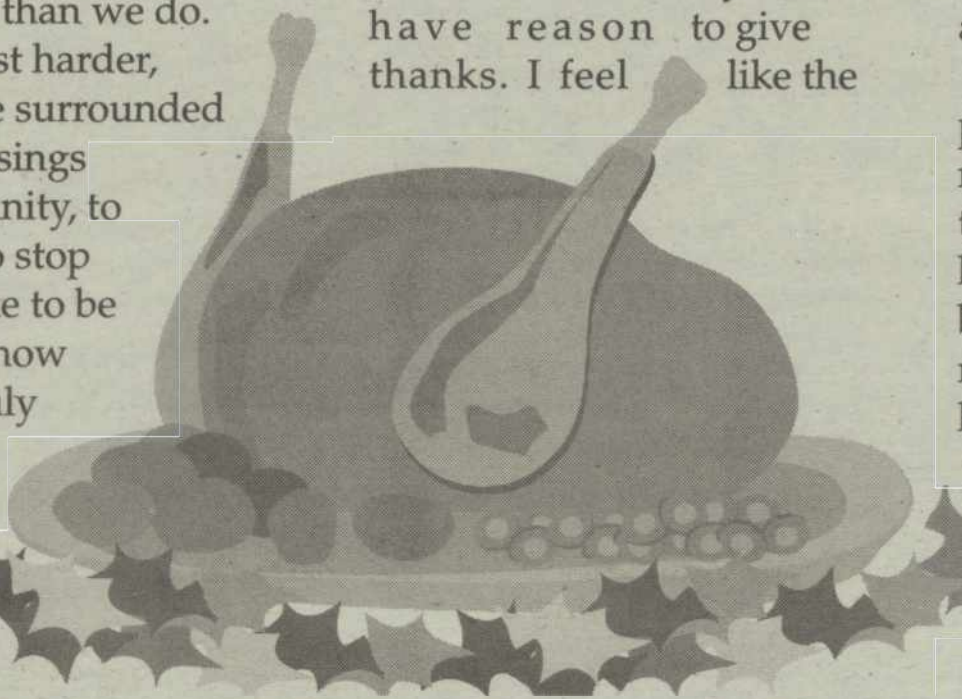
Tis' the season of gifts, parties, and food; a time that can pull our focus inward and blind us to the fact that many people in other parts of the world, even other parts of the city, have much less to be thankful for than we do.

It is almost harder, when we are surrounded by such blessings and opportunity, to remember to stop and take time to be grateful for how much we truly have. When you really think about it, the whole idea behind

Thanksgiving, when coupled with its celebratory traditions, is kind of absurd. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the average American consumes 13.4 pounds of turkey every year, much of it during Thanksgiving. The U.S. produced 664 million pounds of cranberries in 2006 with Minnesota alone raising 45 million turkeys!

On this day that we are supposed to remember all we have to be thankful for, we

celebrate by stuffing our faces with as much food as our stomachs will allow. It seems backwards. Thanksgiving should be the day we simplify our lives, be grateful for everything we have, and take time to recognize and appreciate the little things in life. We, unlike many others, have reason to give thanks. I feel like the



Thanksgiving tradition almost pulls us in the opposite direction.

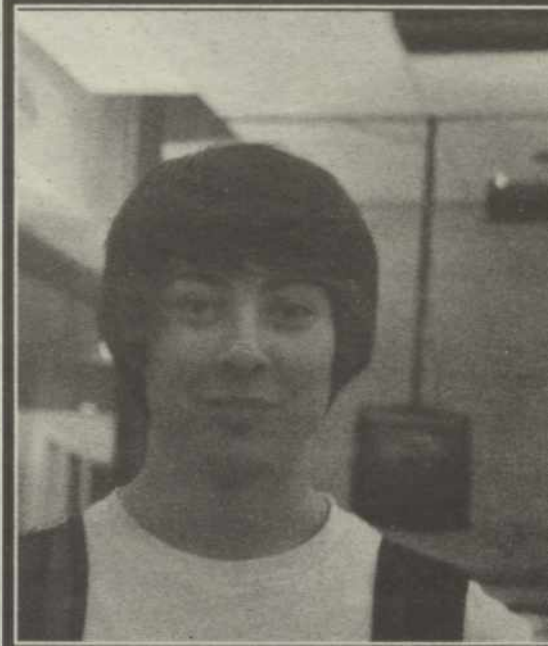
In the U.S., we consume more dollars worth of turkey on Thanksgiving than the Gross Domestic Product of 22 different nations around the globe, according to World Fact Book. Now that is a shocking statistic. What we spend on one pound of turkey is almost equivalent to the daily living expenses of three billion people living on this planet. The GDP of one quarter of

the world's nations is less than the combined wealth of the world's three richest individuals. These facts should be an overwhelming reminder of how extremely lucky we are to live in a country where we are blessed enough to even have a reason to be thankful for anything at all.

We are some of the richest people in the world, yet we much of the time, seem also to be the least grateful. It's hard to convey through words because I often don't even realize how blessed I am. I know that there are people who are truly suffering right

this moment yet I still let my little problems and material desires get the best of me. We have to make a conscious effort to stop and remind ourselves that we really have no, and I mean no, reason to complain or gripe about the petty things because no matter how bad our troubles are there will always be someone who is suffering more.

With the holiday season coming up, let's stop and think about how much we really do have to be grateful for and give thanks. After all, we have a whole day named after it, so let's do it some justice.



"If we need a lot more equipment, usually we get more than what's used in other sports."

—Alex Vermillion, sophomore

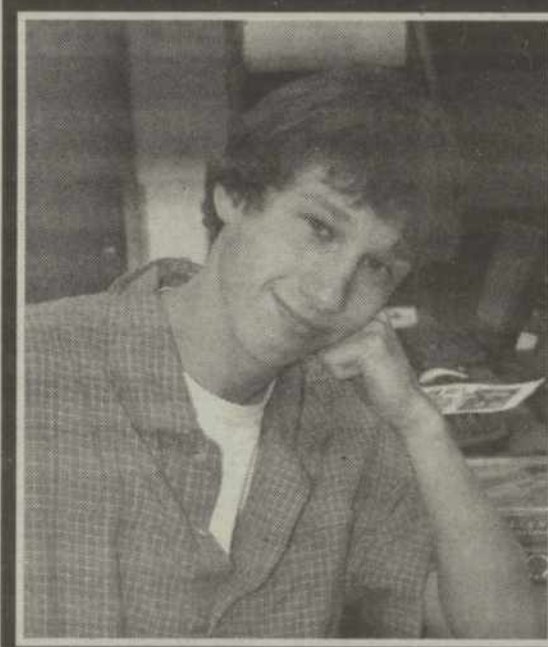
"If they already make money for tickets, than they shouldn't get the most money. The money should be distributed equally."

—Katie Stevens, freshman



STUDENTS SPEAK OUT

How do you feel about the inequality of sports' funding?



"I think it should be equal. It depends on how many people participate in the sport, though."

—Mitchell Rivet, sophomore

"Football has the biggest income. There isn't a reason for them to have so much money."

—Michelle Radulesk, junior



All photos by Malia Chong