

Antelope Garden Club delivers Thanksgiving cheer to 'meals' recipients

By JESSE BERTEL

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Members of the Antelope Garden Club gathered on Monday, Nov. 20, to distribute Thanksgiving gift baskets to recipients of Meals on Wheels in Chino Valley. Sixteen of the club's dedicated members convened on Sunday, Nov. 19, to meticulously craft over 100 baskets filled with a delightful assortment of fruits, cookies, candy and snacks.

Notably, the gift baskets were designed as colanders, providing recipients with a reusable item for rinsing their fruit gifts or during future pasta-making endeavors.

Antelope Garden Club member Kathy Frohock was one of the drivers who delivered the gift baskets to the homes.

"I was the one driving a car and then I had a lady called a jumper in my car and every time we

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stopped, following one of the drivers for the Meals on Wheels, she'd jump out with one of our baskets and go up and give it to them," Frohock said. "She said at every single house, the person we were delivering to would just like, perk up and start smiling and just looked happy and and made her feel like we had made their day."

Many of the Meals on Wheels recipients in the area are homebound seniors.

"These are people that can't get out to go to lunch at the Senior Center, so they have to have meals delivered to their homes," Antelope Garden Club President Mary Barnes said. "They're usually surprised and grateful, very appreciative. Some of them don't get out much."

Participation in making the gift baskets and distributing them brings the garden club members closer together, uniting them through community outreach.

"Number one, it gets our garden club members together because we don't do a lot of projects all together," Barnes said. "So, it's the camaraderie of the garden club members — they get to know each

other a little bit better. And it's also uplifting to know that you're doing something for someone else. It's not about us. It's about what we can do for other people."

Funding for such community initiatives comes in part from the club's annual Garden Sale, typically held in May. This financial support enables the Garden Club to engage in projects that benefit the community, such as the distribution of Thanksgiving baskets, town beautification, and donations to college horticulture programs.

"Most of the plants that we sell at our plant sale are either grown by the club members or they're donated by local nurseries and growing grounds," Barnes said. "When they make their donations, we tell them that the proceeds will go to beautify the town of Chino Valley as well as for educational purposes."

Additionally, the club brightened up the Senior Center dining area by providing live mum plants for all seniors to enjoy during the season. The delivery of gift baskets evolved out of the club's annual contribution of flowers and beautification of the Senior Center.

"We were giving plants to the seniors and then someone said, 'You know what? The seniors really would prefer to have something to eat,'" Barnes said. "So, then we said, 'Okay, then we won't do plants for the seniors, we'll go ahead and do a fruit basket.' We figured fruit is sort of plant related. So, we do fruits and juices and snack bars and things like that."

Beyond these projects, the Antelope Garden Club actively contributes to the community by planting and maintaining various small gardens, including those at the library, Post Office, Senior Center, and the former police building. Monthly meetings serve as a platform for members to discuss diverse topics, host speakers, and plan educational activities such as tours, hikes, and more.

For more information about the Antelope Garden Club and its community initiatives, visit antelopegardenclub.com.

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