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A CHECK FOR \$400 and 35 homemade hats, gloves, and scarves were recently donated to the Clearwater-Clear Lake Food Shelf by the Telephone Pioneers. (Submitted Photo)

Telephone Pioneers donate to CW Food Shelf

By Penny Leuthard, Contributing Writer 12 November 19th, 2020 @ 1:49 pm

The Central Minnesota chapter of the Telephone Pioneers, a charitable organization made up of retired telephone company employees, has initiated a plan to match members' donations to local charities during the pandemic. Last month the Clearwater-Clear Lake Food Shelf was a recipient of that initiative.

The plan was initiated by Dave Hemmer, president of the Central Minnesota chapter of the national Telephone Pioneers organization.

"As we're unable to have meetings right now, I made a proposal to our members that whatever they donated to their communities I would match," said Hemmer. "I was approved this spring to match up to \$3,000."

Pioneer member Carol Justin and her daughter Sheila made and donated 35 homemade hats, gloves, and scarves to the Clearwater Food Shelf. In October, the Telephone Pioneers matched their donation with a \$400 check and presented both to food shelf representatives.

"I live halfway between Clear Lake and St. Cloud, and attend church in Clear Lake, so I'm very familiar with the Clearwater Food Shelf," said Hemmer. "We've been donating to them for years."

With the majority of the original \$3,000 now donated, Hemmer was just approved to match another \$3,000. The Clearwater-Clear Lake Food Shelf will again be one of the recipients.

"Today I approved another member who lives in Little Falls," said Hemmer. "He knitted 50 stocking caps to donate to the Clearwater Food Shelf, and we'll be matching his donation with a \$100 food donation."

The Clearwater-Clear Lake Emergency Food Shelf is located in the Lions Park Building off Co. Road 75 in Clearwater. The food shelf supplies its clients with a three-day emergency food supply. To contact them call 320-558-2954.

The Telephone Pioneers of America, also known as the Telephone Pioneers or just the Pioneers, is a nonprofit charitable organization comprised of actively employed and retired employees in the telecommunications industry, and at one time was the largest corporate volunteer organizations in the country. Volunteers respond to the individual needs in their communities with both time and monetary donations.