

SECOND HARVEST HEARTLAND TOUR & VOLUNTEER EVENT

6-23-15

On June 23rd, IIE Twin Cities had a tour and volunteer event at Second Harvest Heartland's Maplewood facility. Before the volunteer portion, the attendees received a brief tour of the distribution warehouse. The distribution warehouse is where donated food is received, and held until community food shelves place orders for specific items, at which time the warehouse staff picks orders and loads trucks with the orders. The large warehouse is efficiently laid out and is densely packed with pallets of donated food; some shelves equipped with push back racking enabling two or three deep pallet placement per level. The distribution warehouse also contained large refrigerated and frozen storage areas for perishable items. There are approximately 60 warehouse workers on 2 shifts and there are 30 trucks owned by Second Harvest Heartland for use in pickup and delivery of the food.

After the tour, the volunteer portion of the event started. Although there was disappointingly low turnout from the IIE group- 5 chapter members plus 1 student chapter member, there were also members of the general public that were volunteering as well. The task for the volunteers was to work an assembly line to fill food boxes for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). Second Harvest Heartland provides a box of nutritious food each month to low-income seniors 60 years and over through the Nutrition Assistance Program for Seniors (NAPS). Program participants are given a box of highly nutritious food. The packages may include canned fruits, vegetables and juices, dry and UHT milk, American cheese, canned meat, peanut butter or dried beans, cereal, rice or pasta.



The assembly line consisted of “Work Stations” that started with making a box from a flat folded box, adding an item of food at each of 13 work stations, placing a sheet listing the contents into the box, and palletizing the completed boxes. The attendees quickly realized that this was a perfect task for a bunch of IE's! The goal was simple- to keep the assembly line moving, however it was quickly discovered that it wasn't just as easy as placing a food item into a box and moving it on. The incoming supply of food had to be managed- once a box was emptied, a new box had to be moved into place and opened with a box cutter. In the meantime the workstation became the bottle neck and the volunteer had to work quickly to catch up and avoid being the bottleneck. We noticed various improvements that we were making as time went on- making the pick area more ergonomic by stacking boxes; learning the job of the

workstation both up and downstream in order to help out if the worker at the other workstation was re-stocking their supplies.

At the end of the 2 hour assembly line shift, the “production” numbers were tallied with the following results: 9 pallets or 450 boxes of food were packed. This equates to 13,050 pounds of food or 10,875 meals! Great job to the IIE and other volunteers!



The IIE members agreed that this would make an excellent learning tool for IE’s to try different scenarios to see how the production numbers can be affected by various changes. We will definitely look into another volunteer event at Second Harvest Heartland in the future!