

PATERSON, NJ – Under a program coordinated by an online grocery company, students from Paterson’s Gifted and Talented academy at School 28 are assisting with a food donation to a city pantry.

Representatives from Peapod, the online grocery, on Monday met with fourth graders to discuss nutrition and ways to shop on a budget. As part of the project, the students over the next few weeks will put together a food order for the North Sider Ford Pantry. The students eventually will accompany a Peapod driver to deliver the food to the pantry, according to school officials.

Rita Route, the teacher coordinator at the gifted and talented program, said the project meets the program’s goals of developing leadership skills and community understanding among the students.

“This project does all of that and more,” said Route. “Christina Lakind, our 4th grade math teacher, felt the need for her students to participate in a community service project that would have a positive impact on our students. She found the Peapod Kids Give Back Program which reinforces math and nutrition skills while supporting the local community.”

Peapod spokeswoman Liz Jannarone said The Kids Give Back program is a grassroots educational initiative that the company launched in 2010. “We do about five to 10 schools each school year in the Peapod delivery areas,” she said. Jannarone suggested that representatives from other schools who interested in participating in the program check [the website](#).

Route said “community outreach is not a one-time initiative” for the Gifted and Talented students. She said the program’s students this year participated in the Souper Bowl of Caring, under which they collected money and food cans for a hunger relief organization in their local community. Also, to celebrate the 100th day of school they collected 100 toiletries, like toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, and soap that were donated to a local shelter, Route said.

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