

How do you stretch \$300 to provide food for as many needy people as possible? That was the challenge put to fourth-graders in the gifted and talented class at School 28. Their work paid off on Thursday in a big delivery of food baskets to a city pantry.



*Mary Smith of the North Side Food Pantry helping Nathaniel Smith, center, and Caden Valere organize the groceries ordered by the gifted and talented class of fourth-graders at School 28 in Paterson. Funds came from Peapod.com's Kids Give Back Program.*

AMY NEWMAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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After two weeks of putting their math and nutrition learning to work, the students – using \$300 donated by online grocer Peapod.com – chose the most nutritious, least costly food, and with Easter right around the corner, came up with the idea to make Easter baskets for children who would receive their donations.

"The Easter baskets were 100 percent their idea," said Christina Lakind, the students' math teacher at the [Paterson Academy of Gifted and Talented](#) at School 28. "They were really excited about it."

With the help of donations of goodies from the school and the students, they each put together an Easter basket earlier Thursday morning just before delivering them to the Northside Food Pantry on Jefferson Street. The pantry, run by the Northside Community Chapel Christian Reformed Church, opens every Saturday to distribute bundled bags of food to [Paterson](#) families in need.

Lakind said she'd heard about Peapod.com's Kids Give Back program, which challenges students to select the most nutritious foods at the lowest prices using the company's donation. She decided to inquire about her classroom taking on the challenge.

"I thought it would be a good community service project for them and also a great opportunity to merge math and nutrition from our lessons," she said.

Lakind said the students worked in groups and were each given a budget for a particular food group.

They studied nutritional labels, unit prices and learned valuable life skills while completing their orders.

One student said the project was unlike anything the class had done before.

"It was nice to give other people something for once," Petra Najjar, 9, said. "It was different than other field trips because we were helping other people, but we still had a lot of fun doing it."

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