

For Immediate Release

December 2, 2020

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CITY OF VENTURA
NEWS RELEASE

501 Poli Street
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**City of Ventura partnered with Aera Energy to provide
meal kits to community members in need just in time for Thanksgiving**

Ventura, Calif. – Last week, the City of Ventura, Aera Energy, and the Downtown Lions Club partnered together to host its 19th annual Thanksgiving basket donation event. More than 100 low-income families received Thanksgiving meal kits that were prepared in to-go baskets, and included a turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, vegetables, cranberry sauce, stuffing, rolls, yams, and a pie.

“Due to the challenges presented this year by the COVID-19 pandemic, the City wasn't sure it would be able to fulfill its annual commitment to local families,” said Nancy O’Connor, City Parks and Recreation Director. “Thanks to the generosity and support of Aera Energy and the Ventura Downtown Lions Club, the City was able to buy, pack, and distribute Thanksgiving meals to local families living near our Westpark Community Center.”

Thanks to \$2,500 donations from Aera Energy and the Downtown Lions Club, the City was able to purchase ingredients for the Thanksgiving meal kits. The Downtown Lions Club provided volunteers to help pack the baskets, which were distributed to low-income residents at the Westpark Community Center on Tuesday, November 24, 2020.

"Ventura's westside community is made up of predominately low-income residents," said Anita Diaz, Parks and Recreation Youth Program Coordinator for the City of Ventura. "Right now, is an exceptionally difficult time for our families. They are struggling to keep their jobs, and their children are distance learning all in the middle of a pandemic. The Thanksgiving meal kits meant a lot to them."

In addition to Aera's donation sponsoring Thanksgiving meals, Aera also provided an another \$2,500 to support Westpark holiday events including the annual Spark of Love Toy Drive, which provides holiday gifts for families who could not otherwise afford them.

"COVID-19 has impacted life for so many local families who are struggling every day just to put food on the table. Our donation alleviates the worry around the Thanksgiving meal and holiday gifts and allows our neighbors to focus on the things most important to them," said Michele Newell, Aera Energy's Public Affairs Representative. "The holidays are a time when many local families need help and Aera is happy to provide the means to support them. Our community is stronger when we come together and help those that need it most."

For more information about the City of Ventura's Parks and Recreation Department, please visit <https://www.cityofventura.ca.gov/Parks-Recreation>

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