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January 25, 2021

## Boise State students get involved and give back to the community

By McKenzie Heileman (<https://arbiteronline.com/author/mckenzieheileman/>)

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Graphic by Ashley Clark

**D**uring different times of the year, some students and student groups on campus perform community service work to give back to Boise State and the Boise community. Sara Thomas, a senior communications major, is the leader of the Swipe Out Hunger club at Boise State.

[Swipe Out Hunger \(https://www.swipehunger.org/\)](https://www.swipehunger.org/) is a national nonprofit organization with over 100 campus connections throughout the country. Last December, Thomas ran the first swipe drive where students donated their extra meal swipes through Boise State Dining Services to students in need of a meal. They collected over 405 meal swipes.

“Swipe Out Hunger is special because it is student-based,” Thomas said. “It’s students helping students.”

Thomas believes her work with Swipe Out Hunger has made her a better person since she has seen the impact it has on other students.

“I have been fortunate enough to never worry about where my next meal is coming from,” Thomas said. “I’ve heard so many stories about students struggling with not being able to eat or have that security in knowing where their next meal is coming from. I’ve learned more about my privilege.”

Thomas believes students should get involved in community service because it creates a sense of belonging among the Boise State community. She believes it lets people know you care about them.

Hadley Underwood, a senior human resource management and business administration major, works as a programming assistant on campus. She creates programs for first-year and transfer students to ensure they have a great time at Boise State.

“My work has helped me to see how to interact with different students I wouldn’t normally interact with,” Underwood said. “It gives me an internal perspective.”

Underwood believes her work is important because it helps her to understand the people around her, and makes her and the students she works with feel good.

Through [Rake Up Boise \(https://nwboise.org/rake-up-boise/\)](https://nwboise.org/rake-up-boise/), Underwood and other students were able to rake an older couple’s lawn.

“It’s so nice to see students come together and fulfill a need that otherwise may not be able to be met,” Underwood said. “You’re able to see that you’re making a difference.”

For Underwood, giving back and performing community service is part of her daily life. Because of her upbringing, she was taught that serving others is an important aspect of being part of a community.

Emily Hester, a senior business administration and sociology major, works with the Campus Food Pantry to help alleviate food insecurity on campus.

“It’s important for us to realize as a university community that the needs of our students go beyond coursework and getting a degree. Our students are facing a variety of challenges, both academically, physically, mentally and emotionally,” Hester wrote in an email. “The utilization of free resources has been stigmatized through our society to equate to an individual feeling powerless, unworthy or an outcast. We have a lot more work to do, but the efforts we’ve begun are a good start.”

According to Hester, she feels she has become a better person because she is participating in something larger than herself. Like Underwood, Hester was raised to believe in the importance of community service. Her upbringing has brought her to the place she is now.

“Community service unites us all. It makes our communities and our world a better, more connected place,” Hester wrote.



[Graphic of a student eating pizza, pictured with their Boise State ID card used for meal swipes]

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