

2023

NEWSLETTER

Newsletter, information and events for
SoJo Foundation in San Jose, CA



SoJo Foundation
Since 2017



www.sojofoundation.org

2023: A Family Effort

This year, we raised \$1,600 again and delivered 150 chickens and warm jackets to camps and individuals in downtown San Jose. It was a special year for two reasons: my grandfather joined us for the first time, and I contributed my own earnings from refereeing fencing tournaments.

The smiles and gratitude we encountered, as people shared their meals and jackets with others, reminded me why we do this. As I handed out meals and ventured deeper into camps with my dad, I saw firsthand that even small gestures could spark joy and hope.

Chicken Run 2023

As I barely kept up with the good and bad of 2023, I was always reminded of all that I had to be grateful for. From looking out the car window between the long drives to school and activities, as well as the discussions with friends and family, I was constantly reminded of the privileges I possess, and how fortunate I am. Unfortunately many people around my community don't share such privileges, which is why I started SoJo Foundation, eight years ago. The program aims to raise as much money as possible to go out on Christmas Eve, and hand deliver as many Costco Rotisserie Chickens and warm sweaters and jackets to those in need. I am very pleased to say that this year's run went very smoothly and



successfully, with the aid of all of our contributors, who collectively helped raise over \$800.

This year was another very special year, for two significant reasons: my grandfather joining us, and my recent ability to donate my own earned money to the program. After my grandmother unfortunately passed away last year, along with my family and I, my grandfather recently became an integral part of the Chicken Run initiative. Even though my grandfather wasn't able to contribute physically, his constant words of encouragement and wisdom, well guarding the car, and his keen eyes from the front seat view proved invaluable to our efforts

Additionally, a more personal milestone added to

the significance of this year. For the first time, I was able to contribute my own, job-earned money to the program. The sense of empowerment and fulfillment derived from utilizing my earnings from refereeing at regional fencing tournaments was truly edifying, and freedom from having to sheepishly ask my mother if I could “borrow” a measly \$50. It marked a transition from dependency to self-sufficiency, allowing me to play a more active and direct role in supporting those in need through the Sojo Foundation.

With these circumstances in mind, we began our adventure early at the Costco parking lot. As we were in the process of retrieving the chickens, people would often stare (of course it's not very often you see someone with nearly eighty chickens in two shopping carts) and ask us if this was for a party, only to be pleasantly surprised to learn that this feat is all for charity. After maneuvering the carts and loading all of the goods into the car, we were off. In less than a minute, we found a mid-sized campsite, put on our gloves and masks, and began to distribute our warm



rotisserie chickens and coats. Everyone was super grateful, and often blessed us with kind words. After leaving the camp content, we moved onto downtown San Jose, targeting individuals either standing on the centerlines of roads, or slumped over onto fences, with seemingly no shelter, whilst making our way to the Tully community library. Here, my father and I each took a heavy box of chickens, while my mother and grandfather held fort at the car. While the chicken run business attracted lots of attention, and had dozens of vagrants flocking around the car, my father and I wandered much deeper into the secluded forest with our boxes, and dispersed the chickens to those in need.

The encounterings along the messy dirt road were always ones of gratitude, and kindness, which is not always what you'd expect from these people. Oftentimes, after we had given our goods away, I would glimpse back to see the good samaritans sharing their new gifts with friends, family, and neighbors. It made me smile to see that even this small gift could bring so much joy to others. After all, these people still are human, and deserve to be loved and taken care of, which I hope to help. “To kindness and love, the things we need the most!”

We wish everyone a healthy, happy, and blessed holidays and new year!