

# Boilers In Action

LTHC Homeless Services (815 N 12th St, Lafayette, IN 46217)

# Hygiene Kits

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Roger C. Stewart Leadership and Professional Development Department

## What is Boilers In Action?

Boilers In Action is a student organization in the Roger C. Stewart Leadership and Professional Development Department made of 6 student directors and 2 staff advisors that provides service-learning activities to Purdue students through days of service. We focus on social issues such as civic engagement (registering students to vote on National Voter Registration Day), environmental degradation (cleaning up the Wabash river on Make a Difference Day), food justice (supporting the campus food pantry and food pantries in Lafayette on MLK Jr. day), and mutual aid (partnering with the Lincoln neighborhood for Spring Blast).

## What is MLK Day of Service?

MLK Day of Service provides Purdue students with the opportunity to address issues facing folks both on campus and in the Greater Lafayette community. This year, MLK Day of Service focused on food justice and mutual aid projects. We engaged with community partners such as the ACE Campus Food Pantry at Purdue, Food Finders Inc. in Lafayette, and LTHC Homeless Services also in Lafayette. Before service was completed, discussion was held regarding the history of fighting for food justice in the US so that students could understand a small part of history of activism and how people have approached the problem in the past. After service, there was a more specific discussion facilitated within the people working on each service project. Here students discussed the impact of their work and reflected on what they learned throughout the day.



## Hygiene Kits

Rather than putting the hygiene kits together with what we thought would benefit the LTHC Homeless Services' clients, we started a conversation with the organization so they could tell us what would provide the most benefit after gauging the current need of their clients. Each Hygiene Kit included a toothbrush, toothpaste, deodorant, tissues, socks, gloves, a pair of underwear, a beanie, and hand warmers. In addition to hygiene items, a note was also included to make the kits feel more personal. These kits allow us to provide folks with the hygiene and cold-weather products they need in order to feel sanitary, comfortable, and dignified as they navigate this phase of their lives.



## Impact - LTHC Homeless Services

This organization serves those experiencing any type of housing instability. Hygiene is an essential part of health and allows people to feel empowered, clean, and stay warm. Helping LTHC Homeless Services provide their clients with material resources allows the staff to focus on the various other activities the organization participates in such as advocacy, resource distribution, and community education. At the end of this project, 24 students created 120 kits.

## Impact - Purdue Students

Purdue students volunteering on this project had two main takeaways. First, they learned the history of food justice and lunch counter protests in the US. This context allowed them to understand how past events impact the current situations we see today. Second, students learned how the project they worked on directly benefits those in their community and what additional work is needed to fully address all the needs of the Greater Lafayette community. Based on our end of day assessments, Purdue students gained the most insight from learning about Black history and activism, which allowed them to shift their personal frameworks when looking at food justice and mutual aid.



## Reflection

Students have a lot of fun with this project and are very motivated to complete the kits after discussing the history of fighting for food justice and mutual aid at the beginning of the day. Often, the kits are assembled in much less time than we allot for the project. While we would love to donate more kits to the community partner, there are certain logistical concerns such as transportation and adequate storage space on both ends of the operation that prevent us from expanding currently. We encourage students to take their time packing the kits and be intentional with their actions. Not only does this take up more of the allotted time, but it has more of a personal impact on the students and reduces the probability of errors. A new component we added this year was having the students write a note for each kit to make them more personal and engages the students more. I enjoy planning this project, seeing students be so engaged and the community partner benefit from all the work that goes into making this event possible.

## Acknowledgements

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