

In the Messalonskee High School library, four cardboard boxes containing food items sit in front of a book display. Down the hall, on the first floor wing, art teacher Sherrie Corbett Mather is gradually filling her room with ceramic bowls - created by students and staff - in preparation for the Empty Bowls dinner on March 7.

The food boxes and ceramic bowls are clear signs that Messalonskee has joined the battle: the neverending war to combat hunger in Maine.

And that hunger is great.



Students from each class - freshman, sophomore, junior and senior - have a cardboard box in the Messalonskee library to hold contributions to the National Honor Society sponsored food drive.

On the homepage of the Good Shepherd Food Bank of Maine - the state's largest food-relief organization - the following statement is posted:

Winter in Maine is a challenging time for many neighbors experiencing hunger. The increased cost of life's necessities – like heating and groceries – adds strain to already tight budgets. Across the state, nearly 180,000 Mainers, including children, families, and older adults, are navigating food insecurity.

Mather is familiar with that need. She has been organizing the annual Empty Bowls dinner at Messalonskee for several years.

“I do know,” Mather said, “that we don’t just have food pantries in our district.”

In fact, Mather said the Winslow Community Cupboard, a food bank located in Winslow, provides food to Oakland and Rome each month from trailer locations - see the [Winslow Community Cupboard](#) website for more information.

Mather makes her contribution to the food hunger cause with the Empty Bowls dinner. All proceeds from the fundraiser go toward the effort.

The cardboard boxes in the library are also helping in that regard. Each box holds food donations from each of Messalonskee’s four student classes - freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior. The food drive, sponsored by the National Honor Society, ends Friday, Feb. 7.

As for Empty Bowls, plenty of time remains for people to add the event to their to-do list. The dinner takes place from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m in the Messalonskee cafeteria. For \$10, participants get a hand-made bowl, soup, salad, drink and dessert.