

count on their initiative

From the bottom of their hearts, sisters Sam ('21) and Laura ('23) Kopec have used the warm, memorable conversations brought about during their family dinners to make a difference in the lives of foster families. Today, the traditions of eating as a family each night have been lost in homes across the world. Both Sam and Laura hope to bring back these traditions by giving free dinners to local foster families.

"As an Italian family, we always eat together. We sit at the table, pray, and talk. Everyone shares their high points and low points of the day. We listen to each other and support each other while enjoying a meal" said Sam.

Sam and Laura began their non-profit organization this past summer by cooking for a group foster home weekly. By delivering warm homemade meals at supper time, the foster family was able to relax and enjoy their meal together while connecting through the same conversations the Kopecs hoped to reignite at the dinner table. This past summer, Sam and Laura decided to invite their local friends and students at Tarpon High to assist them with their mission of Feeding the Fosters.

"We created a Facebook page and a ton of people signed up to cook and provide a meal; more surprisingly, lots of foster families asked if they could be included in getting a dinner," said Sam.

Over mere months, Feeding the Fosters has grown to accompany 15 foster families and 3 group

homes, adding up to a grand total of over 100 meals every night. With such a vast amount of growth, Sam and Laura were able to transform their summertime service project into a nonprofit organization. With over a dozen families being fed weekly, the parents are able to enjoy their family time without having to worry about where their next meal is coming from.

"The foster children have also enjoyed the variety of homemade meals and their caretakers are grateful for the extra time they can dedicate to the kids, without worrying about having to prepare a meal" said Sam.

It is such a new and developing organization that there is an incredible potential to grow exponentially. Even with all the work Sam and Laura have had to put in, the joy across the family's faces is prominent and in the end, the effort put forth to provide these weekly meals has been well worth it. Providing an opportunity for students at Tarpon High to earn Bright Futures hours by volunteering, a scholarship to pay off college tuition, the stress of feeding all the families will continue to lessen as students come to help prepare for the dinners.

With the hope to continue making a difference in the community, The Kopecs continue to grow their mission of not only providing these meals to foster families, but to bring about the dinner traditions carried on through their family.

Story By: Sam Allen