



CATAWBA COUNTY

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LOCAL NFL FOOTBALL PLAYER'S FOUNDATION, SOCIAL SERVICES TEAM UP TO HELP OTHERS AT THANKSGIVING

HICKORY — A foundation established by NFL football player Justin Harper has teamed with Catawba County Social Services to provide Thanksgiving Day meals for 100 families in the community.

Harper donated the turkeys for the meals through his Oddie Cares Foundation, named after his grandmother, Oddie Harper. "She always cared so much about the people in the community, and so I care," he said. Harper grew up in the town of Catawba and graduated from Bandys High School. He was a wide receiver at Virginia Tech and was drafted by the Baltimore Ravens in 2008.



Oddie Harper and her grandson Justin Harper stand next to some of the boxes of food that the Oddie Cares Foundation helped provide to 100 local families in need at Thanksgiving. The foundation provided the turkeys. The additional food in the boxes was collected by Catawba County Social Services, which also selected the families.

Harper and Michelle Williams with the foundation contacted Catawba County Social Services in September to see if they could identify families in need. The project provided a box with food for a Thanksgiving Day feast to 100 families selected through referrals from Social Services employees.

The additional food was donated by Catawba County employees. Each box included a turkey, green beans, corn, cranberry sauce, instant potatoes, dressing mix, dessert and bread.

Harper said he hopes to make the donation an annual event. "He has such a big heart and loves children," said Kathy Odom, Family Medicaid supervisor. "He wants to be a good

role model for youth."

In addition to the Thanksgiving Day donation, Harper operates a Youth Football Camp in the summer. More information about the Oddie Cares Foundation is available on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Oddie-Cares-Foundation-Justin-Harper/288251627868260>.

For more information about how you can help with next year's Thanksgiving Day food distribution, contact Kathy Odom at 828-695-2204.

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