

Chrysler Volunteers Strike Blow Against World Hunger

by Irena Granaas

With the automaker's blessings, hundreds of Chrysler employee volunteers at the company's Auburn Hills headquarters spent some time July 17 packing food for people in some of the most distressed areas on Earth.

The *Oakland Tech News* caught up with the afternoon food packing "shift" as they were well into the process of bagging rice, flour and other staples into individual packages containing enough food to feed six people.

By that measure, the volunteers packed enough food to serve 60,000 meals.

The meals were collected by Stop Hunger Now, an international relief agency that sends food where it's needed in 40 to 60 countries around the world each year.

Matt Oquist, Community Development director for Stop Hunger Now, said the agency has been around since 1998 and has been packing meals for delivery since 2006.

"Last year, we made 26 million meals, and we shipped meals to over 60 different countries, but we usually have about 40 countries we ship to on a regular basis," he said. "All of the meals packed here today will go to El Salvador."

In addition to providing the willing hands to measure food items, package them in sealed bags and pack the boxes, Chrysler also donated the 25 cents cost per meal, which enabled Stop Hunger Now to organize the event. Oquist said the meals will go to a program the agency has established in El Salvador, which provides one meal a

day to children who are in school.

Each of these meals provides a child with all of the important vitamins and nutrients he or she needs, "which increases the percentage of parents who send their kids to school," Oquist said. "We've found this increases the number of girls who are sent to school by 17 percent (on average in all of our recipient countries) with the highest percentage of increased school attendance by girls in Africa."

The ultimate goal of Stop Hunger Now is not to keep feeding the same people in the same locations, but ultimately to end the need for this program, said Oquist, citing "transformational programs," which SHN hopes will empower people to start producing enough food on their own to not have any further need for the food shipments.

As an example, Oquist said the organization does a lot of feeding programs at schools, because the group believes education, especially for women and girls, can reduce poverty and hunger. In Haiti, he noted, 80 percent of women are unable to read and write.

A second part of the program is SHN gets sewing jobs for the women while the children are in school. The women earn a little money and are able to buy a sewing machine.

"Then they can do it for themselves with just a small investment in a sewing machine," said Oquist.

"We've found that with every additional year of school beyond the third grade, it increases the earning power of women by 20 percent," he said.



Chrysler volunteers pack food bound for El Salvador for international relief agency Stop Hunger Now.

He added that in Africa, many of the women are holders of small farms, and with incentives to have them stay longer in school, by 2030, these women may help feed hungry people around the world.

Among the Chrysler volunteers, a lot of smiles were evidence that people felt good about doing something so basic to help people in need.

Victoria Hills, a Chrysler engineering intern, said she really enjoys giving something back to others, plus the fellowship of the other engineering interns, who don't normally get to spend time together.

"We are having a good time," she said.

Daphne Harris, manager of Civic Relations and Community Engagement for Chrysler, said about 150 volunteers had participated in the morning session, and about 110 people were packing food at the 2 p.m. session.

"Stop Hunger Now called me in March and explained what their mission is," she said.

Harris decided it was a worthy cause and would be great for

Chrysler volunteers because it was something volunteers could do on site.

She also pointed out that the cost to feed people at just 25 cents per meal was "phenomenal."

"They want to help in a more holistic way," Harris said. "Not just to feed a person for a day, but to help them sustain themselves for a lifetime."

GM's First Half Global Sales Report Shows Company Sales Up 4 Percent, Chevy 1.4

Chevrolet sold a record 2.5 million vehicles around the world in the first six months of 2013, up 1.4 percent over the same period in 2012.

It was the 11th straight quarter of increased sales.

New products like the Onix subcompact car in Brazil, which is based on the Gamma platform and is the successor to the Chevrolet Celta, helped lead the way.

The Impala full-size sedan in the U.S. and Colorado midsize pickup, which is made in Thailand, in Southeast Asia also contributed strongly to sales.

Overall, General Motors Co. posted sales of more than 4.85 million vehicles in the first half of 2013, an increase of nearly 4 percent over the same period in 2012.

"Chevrolet is in the midst of the most aggressive new product rollout in the brand's history," said Alan Batey, senior vice president of Global Chevrolet. "The continued sales growth around the world is a result of a focused effort to strengthen Chevrolet's presence in developing markets as well as its relationship with consumers by offering the right products, technologies, and world-class customer service."

In the U.S., Chevrolet's small car lineup continues to attract new customers to the brand, Batey said. Sales of the Sonic, Spark, Cruze and Volt combined were up nearly 25 percent in the

first half of 2013. Full-size truck sales also increased 23 percent over the same period and dealers are delivering the all-new Silverado to consumers at a rapid pace, averaging only 10 days on dealer lots.

Chevrolet sales in China rose 6.1 percent to nearly 322,000 units, fueled by strong sales of the Sail, Cruze, Malibu and Captiva.

The top five Chevrolet sales

"Chevrolet is in the midst of the most aggressive new product rollout in the brand's history."

— Alan Batey

markets in the first six months of 2013 were:

- United States 1.02 million – 5.6 percent increase;
- China 322,000 – 6.1 percent increase;
- Brazil 305,000 – 5.1 percent increase;
- Mexico 91,000 – 15.7 percent increase;
- Russia 80,200 – 16.1 percent decline.

GM first-half 2013 sales in North America were up nearly 8 percent and nearly 7 percent throughout its International Operations. GM achieved a sales record in China with a 10.6 percent increase to 1,567,392 units.

The total North American market sales, including Canada and Mexico, were 1.641 million in 2013, versus 1.524 million in 2012, an increase of 7.7 percent. For 2013, Chevrolet had 17.2 percent of the market. In 2012, it represented 17 percent.

Sales in Europe, which includes Western, Central and Eastern Europe plus Russia, took a hit. In 2013, Chevy sold 797,333 vehicles, a 6.5 percent decline from the 2012 figure of 853,059. Market share remained virtually the same – 8.4 in 2013, 8.5 in 2012.

South American sales stayed pretty much the same. Chevy sold 496,719 in 2013 and 501,510 in 2012. That is a 1 percent decline in sales.

International Operations, which include Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Middle East, saw a 7 percent increase in sales. That comes to 1.917 million in sales this year versus 1.790 in 2012.

Market share remained pretty much the same – 9.4 percent in 2013, compared with 9.3 percent in 2012. (Iran, North Korea, Syria and Sudan are excluded from sales volume and market share calculations.)

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