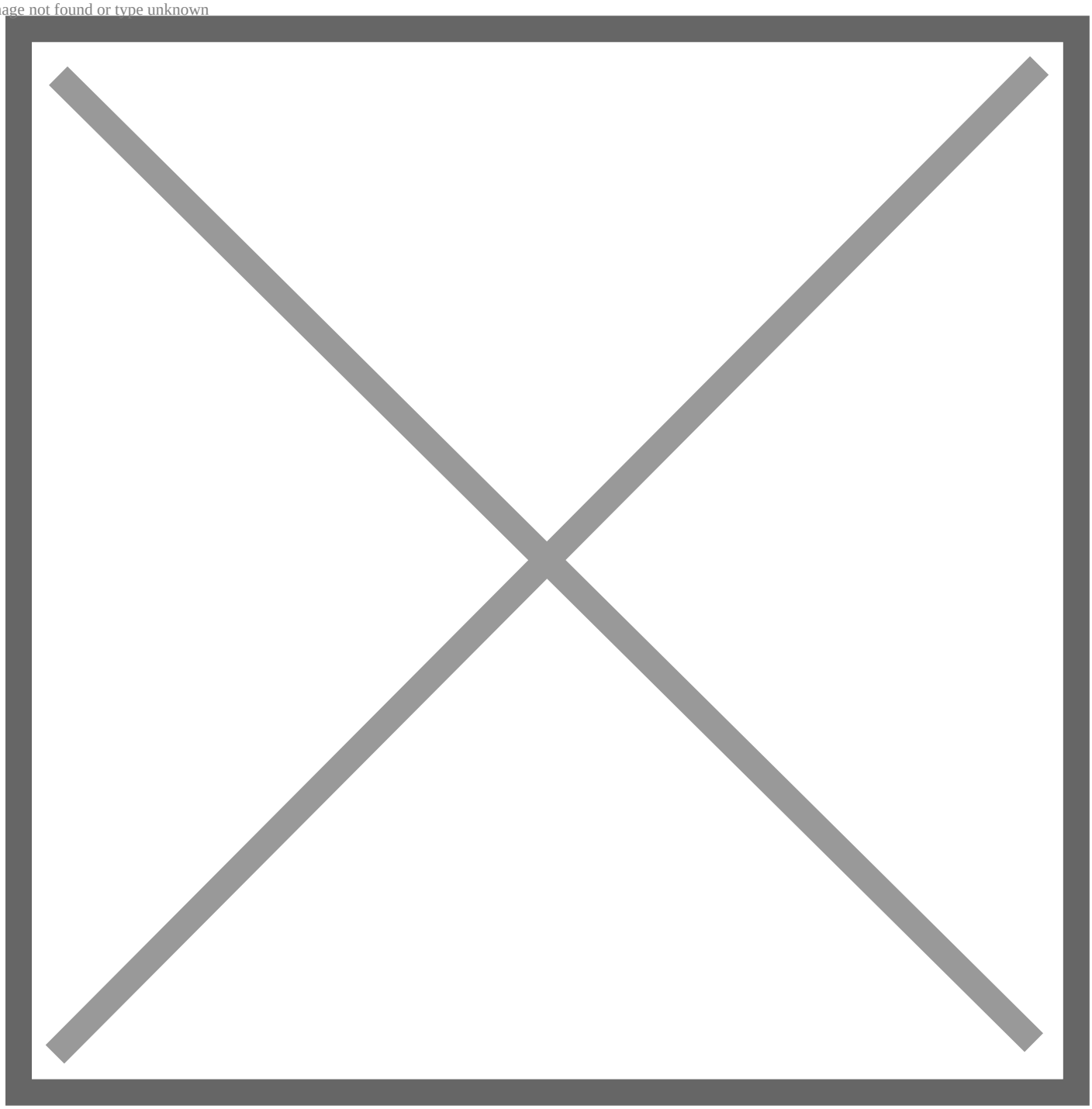
Serving With Purpose: Toyota Team Members Hand Out Meals and Smiles at Minnie’s Food Pantry

December 16, 2025

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On a hot and sunny day in October, a group of Toyota team members spent their day supporting a local food pantry.

Dressed in blue jeans and red Toyota t-shirts, members handed out bags of groceries to residents from the Dallas–Fort Worth (DFW) community, unpacked new clothes and organized educational books and winter holiday decorations.

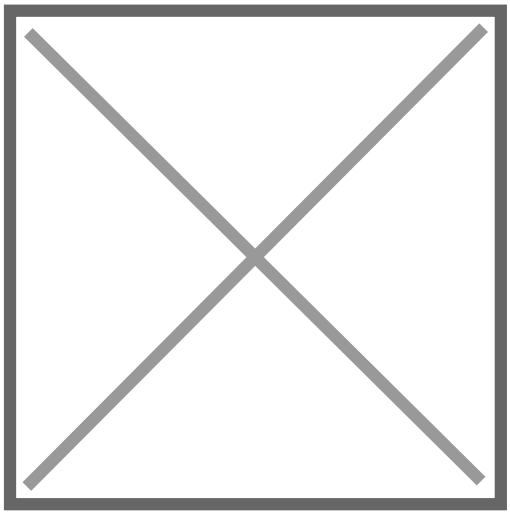
“I give credit to the TODOS group,” said Doug Murtha, group vice president and chief business information officer for Toyota Motor North America (TMNA). “They set this up and did a great job coming out.”

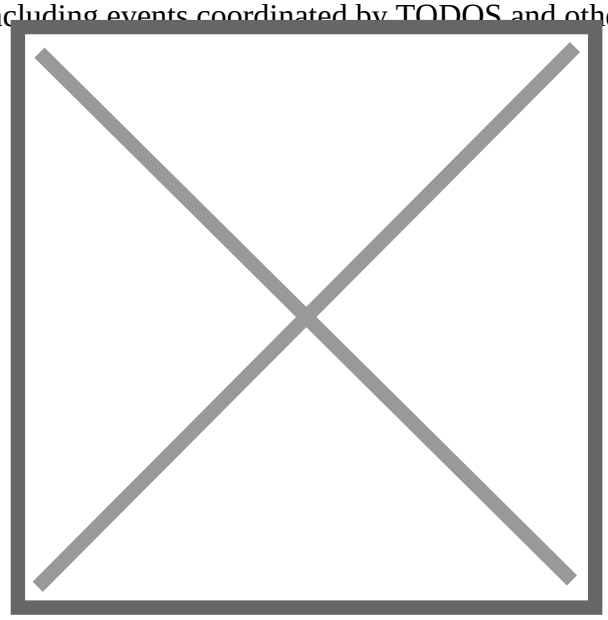
Murtha was referring to the Minnie’s Food Pantry drive where team members volunteered their time just a few miles from TMNA’s headquarters in Plano, Texas. Minnie’s Food Pantry is a nonprofit organization that provides meals and other services to families in the DFW area.

Toyota Organization for the Development of Latinos (TODOS), one of Toyota’s business partnering groups (BPGs) that is open to all team members, regardless of team members’ backgrounds, coordinated the volunteer event.

Through Toyota4Good, the company’s giving and volunteering engagement program, team members are able to sign up for various volunteer activities including events coordinated by TODOS and other BPGs.

Kindness In Action





Minnie’s Food Pantry opened its doors to residents in 2008. Over the years, the organization has been able to expand their services and increase the number of families they support, officials said.

LaQueesha Givens, an HR analyst at TMNA, said the team came together to lend a helping hand to families in need.

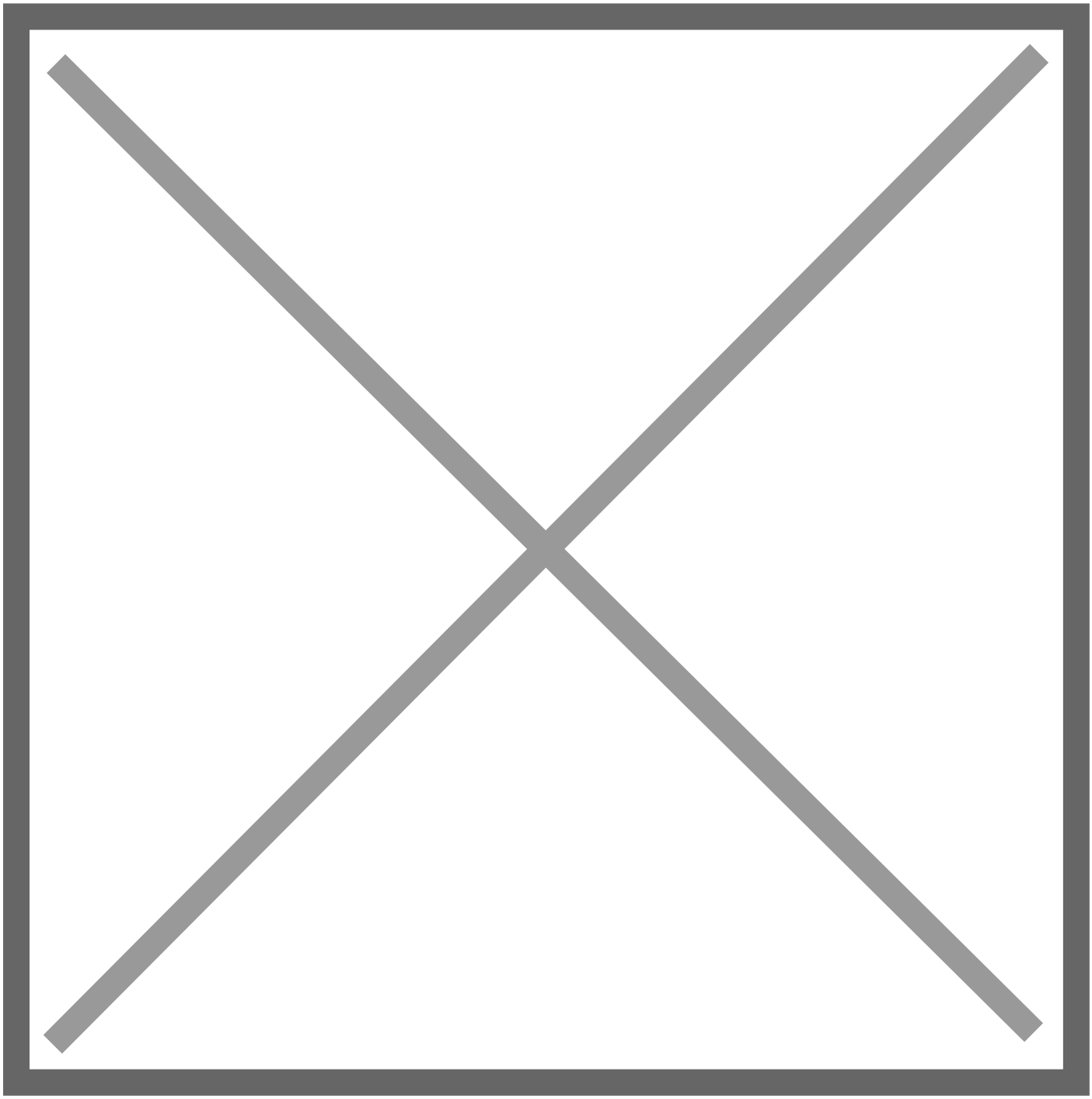
Erica Simon, director of volunteer engagement for Minnie’s Food Pantry, said volunteers are the backbone of the organization and they could not be as successful as they are today without them. The pantry also has a clothing boutique and provides educational classes and other resources for local residents.

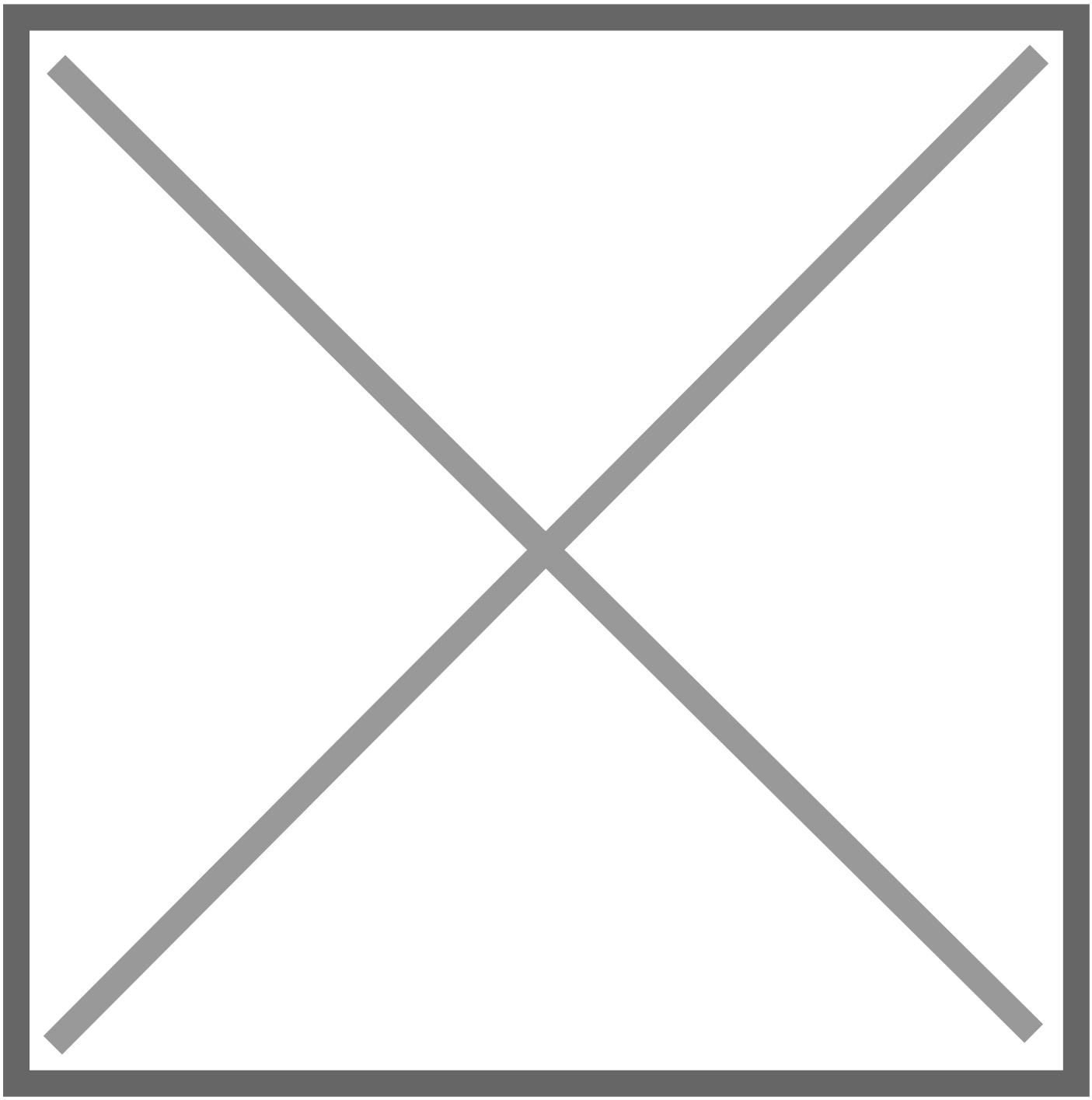
“All volunteers are welcome. And when we have corporate groups such as Toyota come in to serve with us — they not only bring their hands, but they bring their talents as well,” she said.

While Nithya Balachandran, a compliance and audit senior analyst at TMNA, spent time packing canned goods inside Minnie’s headquarters, Givens helped place bags of fresh produce, frozen meats and ready-to-eat meals into cars at the drive-through distribution location.

“What I appreciate about working at Toyota is the flexibility to volunteer during business hours.,” Balachandran said. “I believe food, clothing, and other necessities are basic human rights, not a privilege. I always feel honored and grateful to be able to contribute to the community any way that I can.”

Small Acts, Big Impact



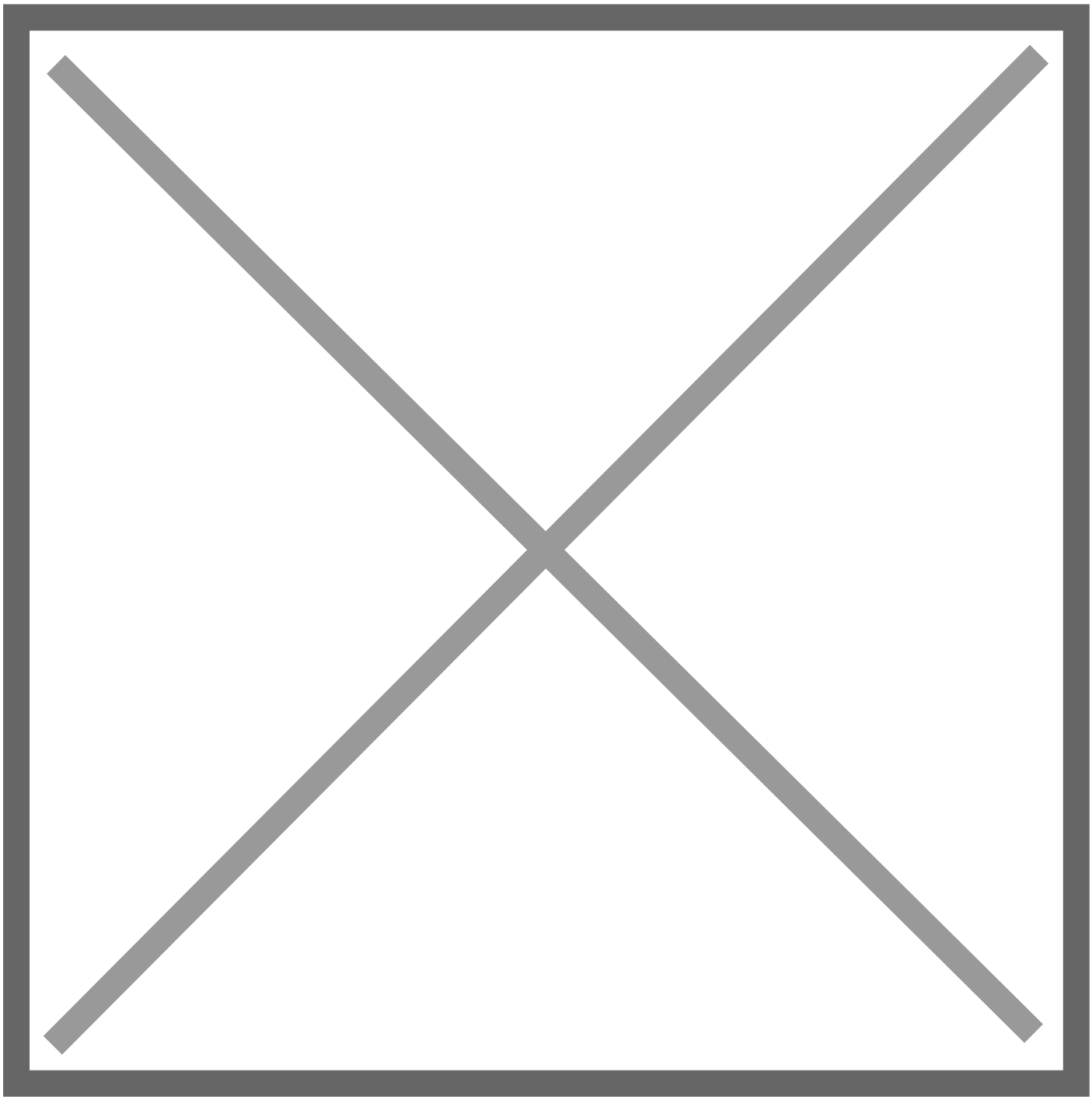


Joy Merino, TODOS' Plano chair and a compliance and audit senior analyst at TMNA, said the pantry event gives team members an opportunity to support the community in a number of ways.

Merino loves spending her time at the Minnie's boutique. She started smiling as she was hanging up a baby's onesie with blue motorcycles.

"We want to help others," she said. "We just have to find the time to make all things happen because we (TODOS) also help set up career development, mentoring and other business-related support."

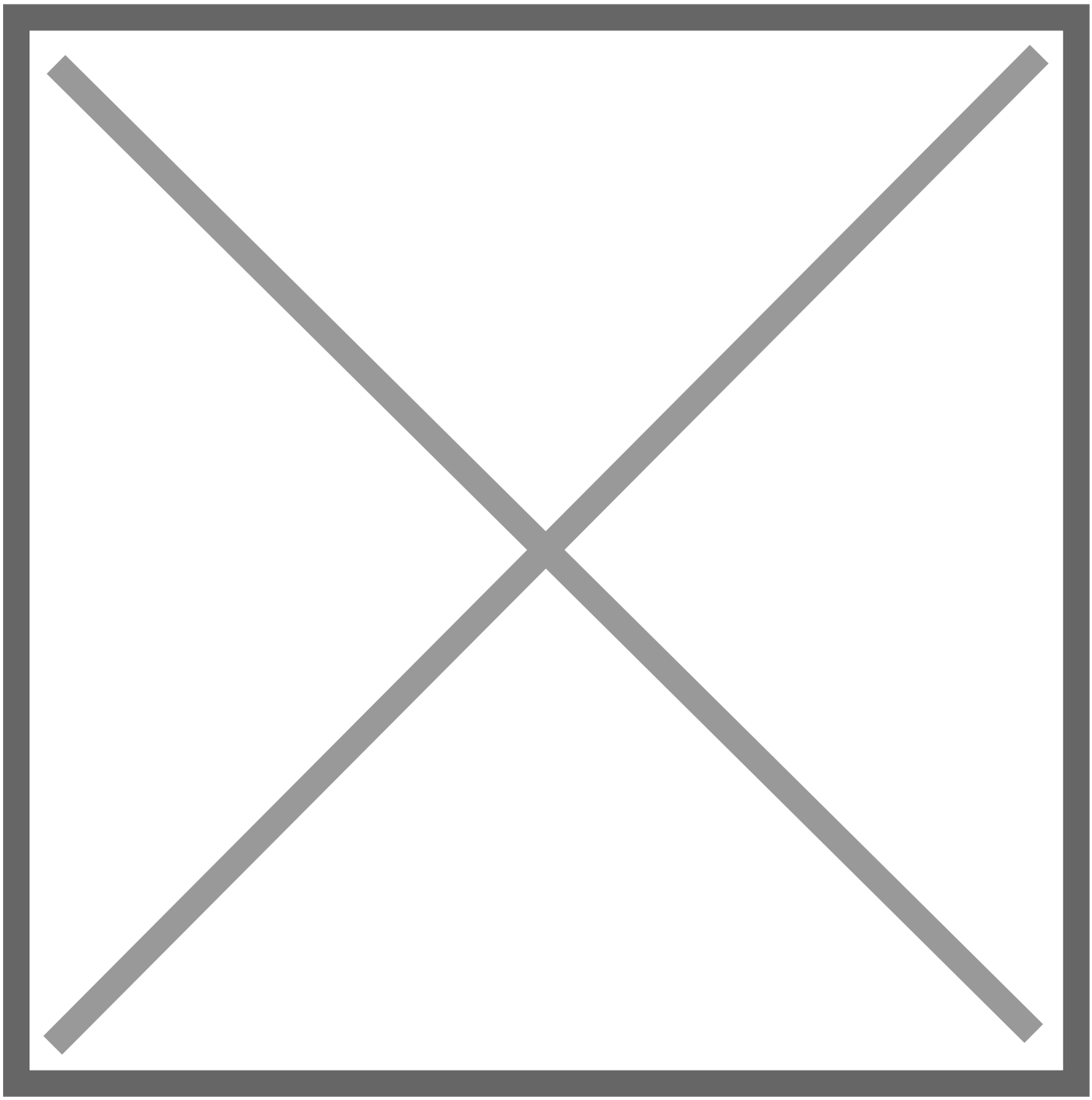
All Hands On Deck



Silvio Ledezma, a sales training analyst with Toyota Financial Services, looked at the volunteer activity as a way to serve the community and an opportunity to meet other Toyota team members.

“I’m new to helping out with the Minnie’s pantry and I noticed as soon as you walk through the door, there is a lot of energy. Everyone is willing to help out,” he said. “I think it’s a wholesome way to also network with team members from other departments.”

A Great Day to Make a Difference



As the team gathered together to hear how many families they served during the food drive, Toyota event coordinators Vicki Plaza and Melody Winter were thrilled that the team completed the job for the day.

“It was awesome today,” said Plaza, an accounting and finance senior analyst for TMNA. “I love volunteering here and I enjoy volunteering with the Toyota team.”

Winter, who is an executive assistant at TMNA, agreed.

“It was so fulfilling to see the smiles on everyone’s face when they came to pick up their food,” she said. “I believe we made a difference.”