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## Amigos fundraisers help send volunteers to Latin America

By John T. Miller



Amigos volunteers unload product in November for the annual fundraiser. Photo provided

In an annual ritual dating back to 1975, truckloads of grapefruit and holiday poinsettias arrived in Moraga recently to signal the beginning of this year's Amigos de las Americas fundraising drive.

The Amigos program, as it is commonly known, is a nationwide organization established in 1968. Volunteers are sent to Latin American countries to help with projects such as community health, equality through sports and teamwork, and environmental preservation. In addition, each pair of volunteers works in collaboration with community members on projects the community needs, whether it be building a covered bus stop, a soccer field, or painting the local school.

The Ruby Red grapefruit is shipped directly from Texas, with about 20 grapefruit per box and a price of \$25 each.

Poinsettias are deep vibrant colors of red and green and are approximately 15-inches tall, providing attractive holiday ambience. The cost is \$15 each.

The program also recently added organic, fair trade coffee to the list of items for sale, purchasing the product from the Santa Cruz Roastery and selling it for \$15 a pound.

The Amigos program purchases the products at wholesale prices and uses the profit to fund their programs. It is also a test of the trainees' commitment to fund their own volunteer experience.

All total, the East Bay Chapter - with 28 trainees this year - will sell 1,400 boxes of grapefruit, 1,176 poinsettias, and 1,008 pounds of coffee.

Parent coordinator Mary De Luna said, "We are close to sold out but we still have some product left." To order, contact them through their website at <http://www.eastbayamigos.org/buy-products>.

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[back](#)

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