

Wakefield Food Pantry, Annual Report – October, 2017

Located at 1500 Wakefield Road, Wakefield, NH 03872

Our vision: a hunger-free community

Overview

The Wakefield Food Pantry's new building was completed and opened in January 2013. After almost five years in operation, we have worked out the systems and work flow and have become very efficient at procuring, processing and distributing food. Because of these efficiencies at the July 2017 board meeting it was decided to open up our pantry to recipients from Milton, NH and Newfield, ME. While Newfield has had limited participation, Milton has become our second largest town served.

We are distributing food to approximately 65-70 families per week from Wakefield, Brookfield, Milton, Newfield and Effingham. See Metrics of volume and population demographics provided attached.

Board Membership

At the Annual Meeting in October, 2016 the following people were elected to the Board: Colleen Nicastro, Tracey Kolb and Deb Wilson. Additionally, Carol Lundgren agreed to stay on as Secretary for one more year. Howie Knight was elected President, Janet Bye as Vice President and Janet Miller as Operations Manager.

Food Sources

The vast majority of the food distributed from our pantry continues to come from the New Hampshire Food Bank located in Manchester. We have an active network of volunteers with trucks going to the Food Bank usually once a week. We are collaborating with the Hannaford Supermarket in Ossipee to receive food donations twice a week which include meat, bakery, dairy, and produce. In 2017 we received one to two tons of food monthly, January through September, from this very important source. In addition we receive deliveries from USDA six times a year; the most recent delivery was 100 cases of food. These three sources are very important in helping us keep costs down and our food supplies adequate. As a three-day emergency food pantry, we provide nine meals to each individual once a week at a cost of 35 cents per meal. Food is purchased from Hannaford and Lovell Lake Food Center as necessary to keep up the stocks.

Other sources are also very important to us, notably the area churches, McKenzie's Farm, the Boy Scouts, schools, post office and community members who drop off food either once a year in a major drive or all year long on a mostly weekly basis.

In 2016, we served families 188 over the two holiday periods with boxes of food containing frozen turkeys or hams, fresh produce and frozen pies.

Organic Garden

Lead by organic gardener, Frank Frazier, our garden had a banner year providing recipients with healthy greens, tomatoes, green beans, cabbage, cucumbers, squash, rhubarb and the raspberries. With the help of Liberty Mutual employees we now have a composting system.

Screening Recipients

Starting In 2013 and each year since, we implemented a rigorous process of vetting our recipients to be sure of their ongoing eligibility for the pantry food using the USDA and the Food Bank criteria. The good news is that, with only a few exceptions, the reviewed recipients were qualified to receive services. This screening is done annually in March. The Registrars are now well versed in doing the necessary follow up. We have also, on occasion, checked our database with Wolfeboro's pantry to assure that no one had used the pantry in both locations on the same day. In previous years, we did find two individuals who needed to be counseled re this practice and none in the last twelve months.

Our pantry supports about 600 individuals in five towns at various levels during the past year.

Building/Equipment

The building is a huge improvement over our former location. The volunteers are able to distribute food rapidly to 65-70 families per week in the same five hours that we have been operating over the last twelve years.

We now have a service agreement with Laconia Refrigeration to do preventative maintenance twice a year on all of our refrigeration units as well as our boiler.

The Generator Connection still provides our maintenance on our back-up generator.

Volunteers

The pantry has more than 70 volunteers from the area communities. It is an active network of dedicated community members who volunteer for kitchen prep duties, food distribution, cleaning, registration, food pick up and delivery, trash removal, grounds keeping and gardening. Several volunteers are also pantry recipients.

The pantry delivers food to approximately eight home-bound recipients each week.

In 2016, volunteers gave a total of 6,148 hours and drove 27,660 miles to serve the community.

This will be the fifth year of receiving a week-long volunteer effort by Liberty Mutual Insurance employees. For one week in May we have five volunteers for four days to help us with annual spring work. These volunteers wash windows, deep clean the coolers, clean up the exterior landscaping and help get the garden ready for the season.

Social Media/Newsletter

We have increased our presence on social media with a dedicated Facebook page. A newsletter entitled **Tid Bits** is published regularly and distributed throughout the community in paper form, by email and to donors in personal thank you notes.

Children's Programs

The Food Pantry is currently supporting the following:

- **Food in Time (FIT)** is a summer feeding program to benefit those children who have been nourished through the school breakfast and lunch programs during the school year. This year the pantry supported 39 children in 18 families. It can be a hardship to the families to have the children home for the summer in terms of having enough food for all of the family members. The pantry serves these children by providing emergency food to their family using Lovell Lake gift cards. This year we provided gift cards for an extra week due to the schools having a delayed start. This program costs the pantry approximately \$10,000 a year and is funded through a grant.
- **Effingham Elementary School** This is the third year of supporting the food needs of this school. The pantry provides bags of food for 9-12 children each week, delivered to the school for weekend supplementary food for the most needy of their children. (some of whom live in the local motel with limited kitchen equipment). The cost of this program is estimated to be \$1000 annually and is funded through a grant.
- **The Books Program** We have established and maintained book shelves at the pantry from book donations from the community. We invite children to take books home and to establish their own personal home libraries. We use grant money from the Alden Young Trust to purchase approximately \$500 worth of new books for the annual Christmas Santa Program. We have a volunteer overseeing this effort and she has energetically improved and increased the selection and added a children's table and chair set.
- **Camp Snacks** Given that many children come hungry to the Parks and Recs Summer Campers program, the Pantry sponsors a program (since 2008) called Camp Snacks where Board members shop each week during the summer to provide healthy snacks for the campers. This program costs approximately \$1000 per summer and is currently covered by donations by the Board members. Again this year we received very colorful thank you notes from the children and the staff.

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- **PACS** (Profile Advancing Children’s Success) This is a program developed by the Profile Bank in partnership with the pantry to purchase and equip back packs with all the school supplies that would be needed for a child specific the age and grade. It is the FIT children who receive these backpacks and they are distributed by the food pantry on the last day of FIT card distribution before school begins.
- **WD-30** (Wipes and Diapers – 30 pack): In May of this year, the pantry started a program to distribute wipes and diapers (one package per week) to families with eligible children. The annual cost of this program is approximately \$2000. The funding comes from a grant.

Fundraising Done by the Pantry

Our major/regular fundraising endeavor helps to increase the awareness of the WFP and meet food costs.

- **ARFF Walk** (Animals Raising Funds for Food) Held on September 2 this event was planned and executed in partnership with St. John’s Episcopal Church. Pets and their owners (all dogs this year) walked from Turntable Park to the Poor People’s Pub and back and raised over \$3000 in sponsorships. We also hosted an open house at the Wakefield Food Pantry building (1500 Wakefield Road) to celebrate the fifth year anniversary of the building.

Fundraising Done by Others

- **Easter Dinner at Cindy’s Restaurant** (this annual event will not benefit the WFP every year as Cindy plans to rotate her beneficiaries) This year, it netted \$2,645 to the pantry.
- **Poor Peoples Pub** held a brunch raising \$2,000 for the WFP
- **Lilac’s Consignment** is a new partner with the WFP. The pantry will receive a monthly portion of sales that is directed by the customer to the pantry.
- **Amazon Smile** provides a quarterly portion of sales from all online shopping where the customer has directed their benefit to the pantry.
- **Turkey Trot** at the Province Lake Golf Course each November helps to fund the holiday meals.
- **Episcogolf** planned and executed by St. John’s Episcopal Church has regularly provided annual grants to support our children’s programs.
- **The Black Panther** football team has an annual collection of cash for the pantry.
- **The Masons and the Lions** regularly have a fundraiser for the pantry.
- **Lovell Lake Food Center** has a holiday drive to help fund bags of donated food.
- **Hannaford** has an annual holiday food drive to help fund “Helping Hands” boxes which come to the pantry for distribution.

- **Churches of the community** provide weekly and ongoing support in the form of food donations
- **Boy Scouts** food drive brings boxes of food for the pantry.

Community Relations

It is no exaggeration to say that the WFP could not exist if it were not for the widespread and deep commitment the community has to the pantry.

Federal Grant

For the second year the pantry applied for additional FEMA funding and was awarded a grant of \$1,212 to be distributed in 2018 after the pantry submits the food receipts and copies of checks in 2017 amounting to the total of the grant.

Respectfully submitted,

Howie Knight, President

Janet Bye, Vice President

Elizabeth Conner, Treasurer

Carol Lundgren, Secretary and Editor of the "TID BITS" Newsletter