

Food Pantry Network News

March 2012



Paying it Back

Every now and then a recipient of services from one of our pantries is in a position to give back. At the end of 2011, we were excited to be contacted by a former client who indicated that she wanted to provide us with a grant check from her new employer to help others who face what she was facing.

In 2010 due to the tough economy, Amy was laid off from her position with a local Midland business. Having a mortgage and other regular expenses, she soon found her cupboards bare. While it was difficult for this college-educated, professional, independent, single young woman to admit, she needed help and she needed food. After a call to 211, an appointment was arranged at the HELP Pantry at Memorial Presbyterian Church. She received a week's worth of groceries which helped her get over the hump.

Amy was able to find a new job in Grand Rapids in short time, but did not forget the help she received. When her new employer Priority Health put out a call for proposals from its employees to fund twenty-five \$1,000 grants in honor of their 25th anniversary, Amy thought of us. Amy's request was one of the winners out of 84 proposals!

In December, Amy returned to Midland to present EFPN with the \$1,000 gift to board president Doug Koop. "It was difficult to make the call for help," said Amy. "But the care and warm treatment by the volunteers at HELP made me feel better about myself and my situation. The Midland Community has such a dedicated group of people to help those in need, I wanted to make sure that if I had a chance to give back I would take advantage of it."

Thank you, Amy, for thinking of others who may be facing exactly what you were just a short time ago.

Did You Know?

Volunteers put together special birthday kits for needy families. One of the saddest things to consider is when a family in need is unable to throw a traditional birthday party for a child. The kits each contain cake mix, frosting, napkins, cups, plates, candles, crepe paper, and an unsigned birthday card.

Please call to find out whether supplies are currently needed for these kits!

QUICK STATS FOR 2011

VOLUNTEERS:

45 Backpack Buddies
197 Pantry Sites
467 Mobile Food Pantry
605 Filling the Cup Food Giveaways



FED AT PANTRIES:

3202 families = 10,534 people

SERVED THROUGH MFP:

2462 families = 8835 people

BACKPACK MEALS:

30 weeks x 640 packs x 6 meals per pack = 115,200

Midland County Emergency
Food Pantry Network
P.O. Box 2521
Midland, MI 48641-2521
www.midlandcountyeftp.org
989-374-0955

Former Executive Director Continues Her Recovery

Many of you are aware that long-time volunteer executive director Jean Kellom was in a little car accident near the end of last year. We are pleased to see Jean back at meetings after her initial physical therapy and thank her faithful husband and chauffeur Dave for running her back and forth to our meetings. This is also a chance to remind anyone who is using Jean's Clover Court address for mailings to please correct your address books to make sure all correspondence for us goes to EFPN, P.O. Box 2521, Midland, MI 48641-2521.

MIDLAND COUNTY EFPN LOCATIONS

*Please call before delivering
food & supplies to pantries*

Bullock Creek Outreach Pantry

at Messiah Lutheran Church
1550 S. Poseyville Rd.
(corner of Gordonville Rd.)
835-7143

Coleman Food Pantry

at Coleman City Hall
465-6961

HELP Pantry

at Memorial Presbyterian Church
1310 Ashman St.
(please use Allen St. entrance)
835-6759

North Midland Family Center Pantry

2601 E. Shearer Rd.
689-7770

SAMS Food Pantry

at St. John's Episcopal Church
405 N. Saginaw Rd.
631-2260

Sanford Food Pantry

at Sanford United Methodist Church
2560 N. West River Rd.
687-5353

Wheeler Road Church of Christ Pantry

1123 E. Wheeler Rd.
835-8559

West Midland Family Center Pantry

4011 W. Isabella Rd.
832-3256

Board of Directors Works on Strategic Plan

Our board of directors thanks Dr. Dick Dolinski for his role in helping kick off our strategic planning process. It is uncertain if EFPN has ever undertaken a strategic planning process in the past, but we are doing so now. Dr. Dolinski has allowed us to look at our strengths and opportunities for growth. We hope to have a formal three-year plan in place soon, and we are already moving forward on many items that have been identified as needs for the organization to improve.

We would like to recognize the hard working board of directors and thank them for a strong 2011: Douglas Koop, President; Angela Buske, Vice President; Lisa Renas, Treasurer; Harry Smith, Secretary; Pantry Reps: Laura Weber (Bullock Creek), Gerry Coon (Coleman Community); Thayre Talcott (HELP); Terrah Johnson (North Midland Family Center); Pat Roush (SAMS); Earl Crawford (Sanford); Diane DeMott (West Midland Family Center); and Jim Forgie (Wheeler Road Church of Christ). Members-at-Large: Louise Fazio, Karen Burrow, George Challener, Kay Crawford, Judy Enger (Sharing Tree liaison), Bob McKeller (Venison Program coordinator), Jim Ostler (MFP coordinator), Sally Ann Sutton, and Karen Dastick (Backpack Buddies program coordinator).

Two Pantries Extend Hours

Wheeler Road Church of Christ will be open for evening appointments to distribute food and personal care items to EFPN clients in need. One reason for evening distributions was access to a new set of volunteers who are working during the daytime. It also offers a more convenient time for clients who are working but still fall within the EFPN poverty guideline for need.

SAMS Pantry at St. John's Episcopal also added a Saturday distribution time to their service days. Also seeking an opportunity for additional volunteers who work during the week, SAMS will evaluate the benefit to the client also.

One additional note is that both pantries are also moving to a type of pantry distribution we refer to as "U-Pick." U-Pick allows a family to move through the pantry itself and select the items they need most. This is in contrast to a traditional distribution where volunteers fill the bags prior to client's arrival. Some interesting feedback from the U-Pick method is that clients tend to pick fewer items than they would receive in a prepared package. This also seems to provide some additional dignity for the client. And it takes a little pressure off the volunteers!

Upcoming Mobile Food Pantries

Mobile Food Pantries are general public food giveaways. Unlike our regular pantry program, recipients from these MFPs are not required to document need through our regular interview process. Clients simply register the morning of the event, are assigned a number, and move through a line to receive product that arrives on a truck from the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan. A typical truck contains enough product to feed about 250 to 300 families. EFPN has budgeted for seven MFPs this year at a cost of \$600 per truck. We were recently informed that costs will increase by \$100 due to higher delivery costs. We typically have sponsors for each of these pantries, but as of this printing we still are in need of sponsors for planned MFPs in August at North Midland Family Center and September at West Midland Family Center. Please call us at 989-374-0955.

MFP dates: March 21 - First United Methodist Church, Coleman; April 21 - Messiah Lutheran Church, Bullock Creek; May 17 - Trinity Lutheran Church, Midland; and June 28 - Blessed Sacrament Church, Midland.

Messiah Lutheran Food Giveaway is more than your typical Mobile Food Pantry. The next Filling Midland's Cup Food Giveaway is on April 21 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at Messiah Lutheran Church, sporting a baseball theme and a visit from Lou E. Loon of the Great Lakes Loons. Since it occurs in spring, one of the activities will be local farmers and gardeners showing how to grow your own food, even in small spaces. Another area has cooks demonstrating how to prepare food they may receive at a food giveaway or grow on their own. The plan is to send home a seedling they can plant and begin to grow food themselves. There will be coffee for early arrivals and lunch at 11:00 a.m. with baseball-theme foods, like hot dogs and chips.

Pantry Reps Get Trained

As part of our ongoing need to keep up with regulations and safety, several pantry leaders participated in a civil rights training program required for those who use USDA surplus foods as part of their distribution. EFPN does not use much but occasionally does have access to some of these designated products. In order to maintain our eligibility with USDA programs, we attended training on March 8 under the guidance of the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan representatives.



Feinstein Foundation Challenge March 1 – April 30

Once again, Alan Feinstein is issuing his foundation's \$1 million challenge to communities across the country in his effort to support the elimination of hunger. For the past 15 years, the Feinstein Foundation has awarded grants to local communities based on the amount of money and food items donated during the months of March and April.

A large portion of our annual income received during this period, and we hope that this year's contributions blow away last year's success. In March and April of 2010, we booked \$77,023 in cash plus food items (each item donated is credited at \$1 toward the challenge). In 2011 our total was less at \$74,805.

We are still seeing an increase in demand for the assistance we provide due to the lingering weak economy and state and federal cuts to program budgets. We would love to report to you in our next newsletter that we hit \$80,000!

If you have been waiting for the challenge period to make a contribution, now is the time. You may designate your gift toward any of our programs to qualify during the challenge period. Even though the State of Michigan no longer grants a tax CREDIT for donations to EFPN, all donations still qualify as regular TAX-DEDUCTIBLE gifts for both state and federal taxes.

SUGGESTED FOOD & SUPPLY DONATIONS

Breakfast Foods: biscuit & pancake mix, syrup, hot & cold cereals

Beverages: drink mix (iced tea, fruit punch, etc.), powdered milk, juice, hot cocoa, coffee, tea

Proteins: beef stew, peanut butter, tuna

Starches: mac & cheese, pizza mix, pasta, rice & potato mixes, Hamburger Helper

Canned Goods: canned fruits & vegetables, soup, canned meals, tomato & spaghetti sauces

Accompaniments: catsup, mustard, salad dressing, jam/jelly, crackers

Desserts: gelatin mix, pudding mix, cake & brownie mixes, cookies

Special Diet: low-salt, low-sugar, sugar-free items

Personal Care: bar soap, shampoo & conditioner, shaving supplies, toilet paper, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrush

Baby Needs: diapers & wipes, diaper ointment, baby food, non-expired formula, baby shampoo & lotion

Housekeeping: dish detergent, laundry detergent, cleaning supplies, paper towels



Midland County Emergency Food Pantry Network
P.O. Box 2521
Midland, MI 48641-2521
www.midlandcountyefpn.org

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MIDLAND, MI
PERMIT NO. 181

EFPN Announces Annual Meeting

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce the location and time of our annual meeting to be held at Whiting Forest on Monday, April 16, beginning with a 5:30 p.m. registration. The purpose of this meeting is to elect officers and board members and to receive the 2011 financial report. Board president Doug Koop will give a brief overview of the operations of the organization. Dinner will be catered by Carousel Catering and cost \$15 per person. If you wish to attend, please cut out the form below and mail it with a check payable to EFPN. ***Please note "annual meeting" in your check's memo line and return your registration by April 9 to allow us time to plan with the caterer.***

Please register _____ people for the annual dinner.

\$ _____ enclosed -or- _____ will pay at door

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City, State ZIP _____

Telephone Number _____ E-Mail Address _____