

# Food Pantry Network News

## Midland County Emergency Food Pantry Network

*Our Vision: "Always Food in Every Home"*



September 2016

### Another School Year Begins for the Backpack Buddies Program

### Reflections

Planning is already under way as EFPN will once again coordinate and fund the Backpack Buddies Program. For the school year 2015-2016, approximately 600 children in 12 elementary schools received this weekend supplement of food. All Midland County elementary school children will receive information regarding the Backpack Buddies Program with their start-of-school paperwork. Children who receive free or reduced price lunches are eligible for the backpack program. Once the forms come back, our Backpack Buddies Program coordinator, Debra Ahn, will work with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan (FBEM) to determine the allotment of items for each school. Items included can be used for breakfast, lunch, dinner,



and a snack. There is no cost for children, their families or schools to participate in this program. EFPN also provides a piece of fruit once a month into each backpack. Because of a grant from Chemical Bank and our ability to purchase low cost USDA peanut butter from the FBEM, we were also able to provide a jar of peanut butter seven different times during the school year. Many schools have switched to plastic grocery bags rather than the backpacks to help control program costs and to ensure that students receive food regardless of whether they remember to return their back-

packs on Monday. Many children and their families have come to rely on this extra food for the weekend. One mother noted that the food helped her whole family over a weekend when their food supply was low.

We think about one third of eligible children participate in the backpack program. Even though every Midland County elementary school family should have received information about the program, we have started an initiative to reach qualifying families through other means like our mobile pantries and regular pantry programs.

We successfully piloted a backpack program with two classes of Head Start children last spring. As a result of the successful pilot, we will continue to include these Head Start classes this school year. We are looking to expand to other Head Start classes and also are looking at including low income children who are enrolled in the Great Start Readiness Program. Expansion is not just a matter of having the monetary support, though that is very important, but also having the school personnel and volunteers to implement this program in their schools.

This past summer we did a backpack program for around 200 children at West Midland Family Center, Coleman Railway Center and North Midland Family Center. For many of these children, the food was offered as an incentive as part of a summer reading program.

We would not be able to keep this program going without all the volunteers involved, including the staff of all the Midland County schools and community volunteers, and the financial support of many, including grants for the 2015-2016 school year from The Dow Chemical Foundation, The James R and Anita Horne Jenkins Foundation and the Midland Kiwanis Foundation. We are projecting the cost for a backpack this coming year will be around \$83.00 per child which translates to \$58,100 for 700 children.

The Backpack Buddies Program is a testament to many resources coming together to make a difference in the lives of our children. As Marian Wright Edelman, an activist for children's rights, said, "If we don't stand up for children, then we don't stand for much."

\* An elderly grandmother gained custody of her young grandchildren sooner than she thought she would. She was not to get her social security check for two more weeks and had no food and no money to buy food.

\* A young father was taking care of his children while the mother was in the hospital recovering from emergency surgery. He said there was no food in the house. He also said he did not know how to cook. Besides food, he was happy to get gift certificates to buy milk and eggs. He said he did know how to make scrambled eggs.

\* A young mother who is very ill, took in her brother's young son because the brother was in rehab. The little boy's mother is not around. This young mother is the only stable person in his life and she did not want him to go to foster care. She said I do not have much but because of the food pantry we have food in the house. She said knowing she can get food relieves the stress. When she was told we would help her for as long as she needed us, she said "I can't talk. Thank you food pantry. I love you".

# Our Pantries

EFPN has eight pantries located throughout Midland County. This article will highlight our Sanford pantry.

## Spotlight on the Sanford Pantry



The Sanford Pantry was started in the early 80's by the adult Sunday school class at Sanford United Methodist Church. This class decided to help a local family as a mission project. A family had been referred to the church by the Salvation Army. The father had been injured in an accident and was unable to work. The mother had to take him into Midland daily for physical therapy. There were two children. The Sunday school class helped the family with tires for their van, gas money for the trips into the hospital and enough food for one month. This local mission was so successful that the class decided that they wanted to do this on a regular basis. The Sanford Food Pantry was the result. The Sanford Pantry was invited to join the Emergency Food Pantry Network in 1984. It was and still is, housed in Sanford United Methodist Church. The Pantry is a non client

select pantry and serves on average 4 families a week.

A client of the Sanford Pantry made the following comments:

*"First of all I want to thank the Lord for making this service possible and I am thankful for the people who work to make it a comfortable experience. It is hard for me to have to ask for help as it is for many people. I want you at the Sanford United Methodist Church food pantry to know how grateful we are and how much we appreciate your hard work and dedication. We thank you all so much for your efforts in making this a little bit easier for me to do. I truly know what it is like to be down and out at this time in my life. God bless your work."*



## Midland County Poverty & Alice Population\*

Area	Households	% Poverty	% Alice
Coleman City	559	16	39
Edenville Township	992	11	19
Geneva Township	439	13	18
Greendale Township	631	11	32
Homer Township	1540	7	14
Hope Township	538	7	25
Ingersol Township	1082	7	19
Jasper Township	459	9	22
Jerome Township	2034	17	15
Larkin Charter township	1755	2	8
Lee Township	1563	14	18
Lincoln Township	1025	10	16
Midland Charter Township	772	10	14
Midland City	17,551	13	22
Miles Township	780	13	18
Mount Haley Township	636	13	16
Porter Townships	511	13	25
Warren Township	829	12	18

\*Data from the United Way Alice Project . Alice: Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed.



## Helping Our Recipients with Cooking

EFPN has been looking for ways to help our clients cook. We have in the past distributed cookbooks donated to us by the American Association of University Women or books leftover from the Ladies of Blessed Sacrament rummage sale. We received a grant from Chemical Bank to provide cookbooks to our clients. We explored a number of options and settled on a cookbook which was written by someone who had received food assistance at one of our pantries. This recipient learned how to stretch her food dollars and wanted to share what she had learned with others. The cookbook is called "Affordable Recipes for Everyone". As the author states in her acknowledgment, "These recipes have taken me through the hardest of times". With the grant, plus funds from our general fund, we were able to purchase enough books to distribute to our food pantry clients over a two month period. Pantry recipients have been thrilled to receive this cookbook that was written with them in mind. We also have a volunteer who is developing trifold pamphlets on fresh vegetables. The trifold includes ways of storing fresh produce, some methods of preservation, as well as simple recipes to prepare the vegetables.

In addition we are partnering with MSU Extension to offer our clients "Cooking Matters At the Store." The MSU instructor meets our recipients at a local grocery store and instructs them on how to read labels, how to select produce and how to make healthy food selections. Participants receive a \$10.00 store gift card and learn how to prepare meals for their families. We also designate some of our Sharing Tree tags for basic cooking supplies. We often find our clients may not have can openers or other cooking utensils such as measuring spoons and cups. Thank you to all who have supported our organization. Without your support we could not expand into these additional food related services.





**Midland County  
Emergency Food Pantry  
Network**

**P.O. Box 2521  
Midland, MI 48641-2521**

**[www.midlandcountyeftp.org](http://www.midlandcountyeftp.org)**

**989-486-9393**

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

**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 Railway Family Center**

4839 N. Coleman Schools Drive • 465-2079

**EFPN Warehouse**

503 S. Saginaw Rd. • 486-9393

**HELP Pantry**

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

**North Midland Family Center Pantry**

2601 E. Shearer Rd. • 689-7770

**SAMS Food Pantry**

hosted by St. John's Episcopal Church at  
503 S. 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

*If you know of anyone in need of food, please have them call 989-486-9393*

To learn more about EFPN, visit our website at

[www.midlandcountyeftp.org](http://www.midlandcountyeftp.org)

You can also like us on Facebook



**Up Coming Events**



**FOOD COLLECTION AT MIDLAND  
BALLOON FESTIVAL**

The Midland Balloon Festival will be held September 9-11, 2016 at the Midland County Fairgrounds. As part of the event, attendees are asked to bring a nonperishable food item. There will be trucks on site to collect the food. Have fun at the Balloon Festival while helping your neighbors in need.

**MIDLAND AREA CROP WALK**

Church World Services will host their annual Crop Walk on Sunday, October 2. The start is at the Midland Center for the Arts. Registration is at 1:15 and the walk begins at 2:00. EFPN is one of the recipients of the funds generated locally by the Crop Walk. Check <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/midlandmi> for further details.



**MIDLAND'S FAMILY FARE HELPS EFPN**

Between August 31 and September 11, store guests who visit the Midland Family Fare, 2026 N Saginaw Rd will have the opportunity to donate \$1, \$5 or \$10 at any checkout lane – and 100 percent of the proceeds will benefit EFPN.

**VISIT AN EFPN PANTRY**

If you or your group or organization would like to learn more about EFPN or see how a pantry operates, please contact our office at 486-9393. We are happy to give tours.