

# Food Pantry Network News

## Midland County Emergency Food Pantry Network

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



September 2017

### Preparing for the 2017-2018 Backpack Buddies Program



Planning is already under way as EFPN will once again coordinate and fund the Backpack Buddies Program. For the school year 2016-2017, we had a record 750 children sign up for the program in 12 elementary schools and 2 Head Start classes. 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. 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 backpacks on Monday. Many children and their families have come to rely on this extra food for the weekend. We are continuing to look at expanding the program to other preschools. We will be adding about 10 low income children from the Greater Midland Community Center Preschool. Expansion is not just a matter of EFPN having the monetary support, though that is very important, but also school personnel and volunteers to implement this program in their schools. In addition to start of the school year paperwork, we are again trying to reach qualifying families through events like our mobile pantries and regular pantry programs, as well as Sneakerpalozza and the backpack distribution event at North Midland Family Center.

This past summer we did a backpack program for around 200 children at West Midland Family Center, Greater Midland Community 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 donors, including grants for the 2016-2017 school year from The James R and Anita Horne Jenkins Foundation, the Midland Kiwanis Foundation, and the Ladies of Blessed Sacrament. The current cost for a backpack is \$3.00/backpack, or \$93.00/student/year, or almost \$70,000 for the entire program. Because of strong support from the community for this program, the board recently approved an additional \$0.50/backpack. This will allow the Food Bank to put in a jar of peanut butter, a can of tuna, or canned meal at least once a month. This will add an additional \$12,000 to the Backpack Buddies Program.

Fredrick Douglas, an American abolitionist, said, *"It is easier to build strong children than to repair a broken man."*

### Reflections

\* A young man lost his job but got another job two days later. He needed help with food because he was without pay for two weeks from his new job.

\* A single mom got the flu and was off from work for one week and was not paid. She was embarrassed to call for help but she said she had to in order to feed her children.

\* A baby went through a growth spurt and drank all the formula WIC had given her. We provided the mom vouchers for more formula.

\* A low income man's wife died. His children came to live with him and he could not provide enough food. He was so grateful for the help.

### Demand for Food is Up

Our eight pantries have seen an increase in the use of our services during the last few months. We are guessing that this is due to the recent flooding in our community. We are allowing flood victims whose income levels are higher than our guidelines to come to our pantries. We also are helping more frequently. Our coordinator who interviews recipients says many are very embarrassed and hesitant to ask for help. They are often overwhelmed by what happened to them.

We are also starting to see people from the Greenhill's Apartment fire ask for our help.

Our coordinator tells victims of flood or fire that the last thing we want them to worry about is having enough food. We have food to distribute because of the kindness of many in Midland.

# Our Pantries

EFPN has eight pantries located throughout Midland County. This article highlights the West Midland Family Center.

## Spotlight on the West Midland Family Center



Midland...Sparkle City. In Midland where, Garrison Keillor would say, "All the women are strong, all the men are good looking, and all the children are above average," it is hard to see poverty...or understand its presence in our community. And yet it's here. Midland County United Way reports one in four Midland County residents has daily concern over how they will meet their basic needs. In this environment, West Midland Family Center (WMFC) is honored to be part of the EFPN as host of a network food pantry. WMFC is located in rural, western Midland County, in Greendale Township which has a population of 1724, site: [U.S Census Bureau 2015 5-Year Population Estimate](#). Here the need is easier to see. Many families live below the Federal Poverty level or are among the working poor - **Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE)**. In a typical year, the pantry at WMFC provides food orders for 128 families or 479 individuals. When full, the pantry is stocked with nearly 5,000 items. And every summer approximately 145 children from the WMFC Summer Program participate in the Back Pack Buddies program, taking home a total of 5,800 food items overall. Food insecurity is a real thing in the Midland community and Midland County EFPN has been helping to address this need for 34 years since 1983. WMFC became a part of the EFPN six years later, in 1989. Since that time, philosophy has changed somewhat. Across the country food pantries are moving away from the practice of packing food orders for families, instead allowing adults to choose their own items based on a very clear knowledge of their family's needs and preferences. For this reason, one of the most exciting components of the current WMFC building expansion project is the creation of a "self-serve" pantry. This model will allow patrons to select their own food items with guidance from WMFC staff or EFPN volunteers. The new pantry will be larger and will permit individuals to move freely within the pantry choosing products that will best serve their families. The new pantry will open sometime early in 2018, in the meantime, WMFC will continue serving families out of the current pantry in collaboration with the EFPN. This model cuts waste, preserves the dignity and autonomy of patrons, and as WMFC has found, can encourage further engagement by families. The new self-serve pantry is set to open in early 2018.

At WMFC the Food Pantry serves double duty. As people come in prompted by their need for food, Family Services staff members follow through to determine if there are other needs that could be addressed. Possibly the family has three year old who qualifies for preschool, or maybe they have recently received a shut-off notice. In this way, WMFC uses the Food Pantry as a front door to assist families with hidden needs. For willing families, additional needs are addressed through education and wrap around support services, as needed. Therefore, in this way, the EFPN Food Pantry at WMFC becomes a family's first point of contact. A year's long relationship with WMFC often ensues providing growth and achievement opportunities for motivated families.



## 150th Anniversary Celebration for Memorial Presbyterian Church, St. John's Episcopal Church and Holy Family Episcopal Church Benefit EFPN Recipients



Memorial Presbyterian Church, St. John's Episcopal Church and Holy Family Episcopal Church are celebrating their 150th year of ministry in Midland. The pantries of two of these churches are founding pantries of the Emergency Food Pantry Network. They are the largest pantries within our network and are client select pantries. As part of their 150th year celebration, these churches are giving recipients of all of our eight pantries an extra gift certificate for the months of September and October.

We are very grateful to these churches and their members for providing this bonus to our recipients. More importantly, we could not be the network we are today without the decisions these churches made in 1983 to establish pantries and form a network to serve the Midland community.

**HOLY FAMILY**  
Episcopal Church



## Thank You Local Businesses, Churches and Organizations for Recent Food and Monetary Donations for Feb - Mid Aug 2017

Adams Elementary Students	Chapel Lane Presbyterian Church	Kroger's Reward's Program	Second Baptist Church
Aldersgate United Methodist Women	Chemical Bank	LaPorte United Methodist Church	St Brigid of Kildare Church
American Arbitration Association	Church World Service	Meijer's Simply Give Memorial	Studley Grange Temple Beth El
American Association of Univ Women - cookbooks	Delta Research and Educational Foundation	Presbyterian Church Messiah Lutheran Church	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
American Chemical Society's Garden	Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.	Midland Area Community Foundation's Give Local Event	The Peter & Dorothy A Solomon Foundation,
Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church	Dollar Daze	Midland Civitan Club	Tri-City Chapter (MI)
AT&T Your Cause-Corporate Giving Program	Dow High School Music	Midland Farmer's Market Vendors	The Links Incorporated
Bay City Branch of the N.A.A.C.P.	Boosters-oranges	Midland Ford Lincoln	Trinity Lutheran Church
Bethlehem Baptist Church #1	Ducks Unlimited - Sanford Chapter	National Association of Letter Carriers, Branch 2317	Trinseo
Blessed Sacrament Church	Ekklesia Fellowship Ministries	New Hope Community Church	Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Blessed Sacrament's Sacramental Prep Class - cards	First Baptist Church	Northwood's Advertising Assn and Integrated Marketing Communications Class	United Church Of Christ
Central Michigan University - RPL 430 class	First United Methodist Church	Poseyville United Methodist Church	United Way of Midland County
	Gleaner Life Insurance Society - Floyd Arbor 206		W Midland Family Center
	Good Stead Farm		Wheeler Rd Church Of Christ
	Islamic Center of Midland		

## EFPN Increases Number of Gift Certificates

EFPN provides our recipients \$10.00 gift certificates. We obtain these certificate from Family Fare Grocery Store because they are the only store that can provide paper certificates where we can exclude items such as cigarettes, alcohol and lottery tickets. The \$10.00 gift certificates are provided to EFPN at a value of \$9.50. The certificates enable recipients to purchase items that EFPN may not stock or have in sufficient quantities- especially perishable items. A family of one would get one certificate and families of 2 or more would get 2 certificates. Because of the generosity of our community to EFPN, the EFPN board decided recently to give three certificates to families of 4 or more.

## Northwood University Marketing Class Helps EFPN

EFPN was honored to be selected by Northwood University's Professor Jiwoo Park's Integrated Marketing Communications Class to develop a marketing plan for our organization as their class project. Representatives from EFPN met with the students at the beginning of the project to discuss our organization and our objectives. The goal was to develop a marketing plan for EFPN that targets individual donors of funds, food, or time, especially those of younger generation. We wanted to engage younger residents of our community to not only get them involved with our organization, but also to know they can seek help if they are in need. We were very impressed with the professionalism and creativity shown by the Northwood students in working through this project. The students conducted a survey to gauge how often their target audience volunteers, and how much they support nonprofits. About 69% of those surveyed were in their target market of 18-24 year olds. The survey respondents mainly learn about volunteer opportunities via social media and family and friends. If they donate money, they are more likely to donate at onsite events or online. They found 82% of their audience was aware that there is a food pantry in their community.

As part of their marketing plan they had a fundraiser for our organization-"Spring Into Giving". They teamed with Coyer Candles with 50% of sales going to EFPN. They also held a jelly bean guessing contest with the three closest guesses getting gift basket donated by local businesses. They were impressed with the interest they generated by this event with their fellow students.

The final report included ideas on possible changes to our logo and a new tag line-"share what you can". They also suggested that EFPN needs to make greater use of social media such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter in order to reach the younger generation. They also recommended that EFPN attend events frequented by young people. EFPN was very impressed with how much the students cared about this project. The students realized that this marketing plan was not just the usual effort to sell more merchandise, but they were able to use their efforts and talents to make a real difference in the lives others. We are very grateful to Professor Park and her students for using their time and expertise in service of others.

## Meijer's Simply Give

EFPN has been selected to be a recipient of Meijer's Simply Give program which runs August 20 thru September 16. Customers can purchase a \$10 Meijer Food Pantry Donation Card and Meijer's will convert this card into a \$10 Meijer's food gift card which EFPN uses to stock pantry shelves. Meijer's Corporation will make a contribution to EFPN based on the number of gift cards purchased. These cards are available at the check-out registers at Meijer's. There will be double match days on Friday, September 1 and Saturday, September 2. On these days a \$10.00 donation will be worth \$30.00 because Meijer's will give an additional \$20.00. Pantry representatives use donations from this program to purchase food items that are not donated or available from the Food Bank, especially to purchase ground beef which is often in short supply at our pantries.



**Midland County  
Emergency Food Pantry  
Network**

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

**www.midlandcountyevpn.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*

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**BALLOON FESTIVAL**

The Midland Balloon Festival will be held September 14-17, 2017 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 1. The start is at the Midland Center for the Arts. Registration is at 1:30 and the walk begins at 2:00. EFPN is one of the recipients of the funds generated locally by the Crop Walk. The walk is 3.5 miles which represents what many woman and children in developing countries have to walk to get clean water. Check <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/> midlandmi for further details.

