Alliance Community Pantry

215 E. Market St., Alliance, Ohio 44601

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Working to end hunger in our community.

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Barb Armitage, Editor

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CAN YOU IMAGINE ORDERING 20,000 POUNDS OF FOOD EVERY WEEK?

Leigh Mainwaring, food orderer for Alliance Community Panty, is responsible for making sure the shelves are never empty at ACP. How does she do it? I interviewed Leigh and she explained the step-by-step process through which ACP obtains 90% of its food. Akron Canton Regional Foodbank's inventory is computerized.

Leigh usually begins three business days prior to delivery to consider the load for the first truck of the following week. First she pulls up the Foodbank inventory, a rapidly changing "real time" system, which lists items as they come into the Foodbank. She studies what's available, beginning to plug in numbers of pounds, cases, and gaylords. As she works, Leigh maintains a running spreadsheet of the order to keep track of number of items, cost, poundage, type of food, etc. She likes to begin with approximately 6,000-7,000 pounds so she can add to it if something special shows up in the following days. She adds to the computer order several times in the interim as new items become available.

As she works, she has to keep certain criteria in mind. **1) Budget** – we have a budget of $6,000 per month for food. **2) Healthy Quality –** One of the primary goals of opening a 'choice' pantry was being able to offer healthy choices, those foods that families need most. These include: meat, produce, refrigerated items, peanut butter, tuna fish, pasta, and cereal. **3) Space** – what space is available in the truck, warehouse, freezer, and refrigeration units. Even a great buy doesn't work if we don't have room for it. **4) Number of Items** – it takes over 7,000 items each week to meet the needs of our clients. **5) Weight** – our truck safely holds up to 12,000 pounds. Leigh aims for no more than 10,000 so the drivers can pick up "surprises" at the free market section. **6) Need –** What does the pantry need? Leigh checks with Terra and Vicky regularly to ascertain what we need most.

Leigh checks her computer often to see what's available

Once her initial order is complete, she notifies John Armitage, Transportation Coordinator, so he can schedule drivers. She informs Terra Faulkner, Warehouse Coordinator, so she can arrange warehouse shelves to receive the newest order.

Among the items that are always in that initial order **IF** she can get them are: 1,200 pounds of meat each week, 400 pounds each of beef, poultry and pork. Canned repacks and dry repacked items (pasta, rice, cereal, etc.) are always good too. Leigh's Top 10 foods to look for include: meat, produce, canned vegetables, canned fruit, cereal, soup, pasta, peanut butter, refrigerated items and canned meat or dinners.

If you make your charitable contributions near the end of the year, please remember the Alliance Community Pantry. We work hard to maintain your trust and to be fiscally responsible as we work to eliminate hunger in our community.

Sometimes there are free surprises on the order inventory and she snatches these up, as our clients love them. Some of the most fun have been Ben and Jerry's ice cream, Starbucks coffee, Smuckers jams and jellies, frozen waffles, watermelons, cantaloupes, and ice cream bars. We can never understand how these expensive items are found at the foodbank, but we love it for our clients.

When asked her biggest mistake, she laughs and reports mis-reading the description for ketchup and being shocked when we got thousands of fast food ketchup packets. Oops! But no harm; they got eaten. We salute her work for the pantry and are grateful for her talents.

ACP VOLUNTEERS WORK AT FOODBANK'S 24 HR. EVENT

Ten volunteers, supporters and board members from the Alliance Community Pantry took part in the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank's first ever 24-hour volunteer event as a recognition of September as Hunger Action Month. More than 1,500 volunteers from Northeast Ohio participated in Operation Orange that started at 4 p.m. on Sunday and ended 24 hours later on Monday afternoon, September 29-30.

ACP Volunteers worked in the Foodbank's product recovery area where donated food is sorted and inspected before food is distributed to its network of more than 500 food pantries, hot meal sites and other hunger relief programs. Local Pantry volunteers spent the afternoon re-bagging cereal into one-pound bags.

According to Foodbank officials, volunteers in the 24-hour event processed an equivalent of more than 142,000 meals. What a great day!

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Japanese students from Mount Union Volunteer at the Pantry

Mayu Nishio and Yukiko Nishio

Eight Japanese students from Tezukayama University in Nara, Japan, volunteered at the pantry during September. The students, who were visiting the University of Mount Union, helped clients shop and worked in the warehouse as they learned about neighbors helping neighbors in Alliance.

United Way

Paying Book Fines with Food?

Mike Patterson's neighbor, Jeanne Hawley, brought him a big box of food for the pantry from KSU Stark Branch library where she works. She said students have the option, under certain circumstances, of paying off book fines by bringing in food donations rather than cash. We are the recipients of their food. It always humbles us to find the many ways our community finds to support the pantry. Hats off to them!

Kohl's and Walmart Offer Financial Benefits when Employees Volunteer

I have to admit that I've had to rethink my stand on national chain stores and their contributions in our community. Two national chains, Kohl's and Walmart, offer local non-profits a financial benefit for recording hours and submitting paperwork when their employees volunteer. In addition to the wonderful help we get, Kohl's employees have volunteered enough times that we've received $500 from Kohl's corporate offices. This is such a terrific idea.