

From The Observer, November 15, 2003

Remember Neighbors in Need During Holiday Giving Season

Thanksgiving tradition teaches us to be especially mindful of less-fortunate neighbors at this time of year.

Pantries around the county are making plans to fill Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for numerous families that can't meet all their living costs, especially during the holidays, when budgets aren't able to provide for traditional holiday celebrations.

Here's a rundown of food pantries in Hunterdon County and how you can make donations.

Open Cupboard Food Pantry of High Bridge is at 81 West Main St. (Route 513), next to the rescue squad building. Hours for donations and pick-up are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. and Tuesday from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Donations can also be left at the pantry's thrift shop next door Tuesday through Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Friday from 4:30 to 7 p.m. and Saturday 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. The shop's proceeds benefit the pantry and anything but furniture can be donated. Call 638-5773 for information.

The 23-year-old Fisherman's Mark Food Pantry in Lambertville is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 89 North Main St., near the corner of York Street. The pantry would like any kind of food, fresh, canned or frozen, but especially canned soups since they meet the needs of people without much kitchen equipment. The pantry accepts coupons and plastic grocery bags from supermarkets, too. Even those who participate in another food pantry can receive food from Fisherman's Mark, but registrations need to be filled out to qualify the pantry for federal surplus food programs. Call (609) 397-0194.

The Flemington Area Food Pantry is located off Broad Street in a building behind Bill Healy Crystal. It is open Monday through Thursday

from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Donations can be made at those hours. For information, call 788-5568. During off hours, call 782-8457 or 782-5372.

Delaware Valley Food pantries operate behind St. John the Evangelist Church in Lambertville. They are open to take donations and to distribute food on Wednesdays from 2 to 4 p.m. and on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon. Clients can register during business hours. For information, call the church at (609) 397-3350.

The Readington Starfish program is a safety net for needy people set up by the township's churches. Its major efforts are providing emergency services to families and large distributions of canned or dried food four times a year at Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter and the Fourth of July. They also prepare holiday baskets for about 75 registered families.

Those in need can apply to their local Readington church for help. Donors can bring food year round to Our Lady of Lourdes Church office on Route 523 in Whitehouse Station. The township cooperates with Starfish by evaluating individual's needs. For details, call Diane Clapp at 543-0975.

North Hunterdon Community Food Pantry has been working for 11 years to feed the needy. Its headquarters is in the Lebanon Township First Aid Squad building on Hill Road. Hours of distribution are once a month, on the Thursday after the first Friday of the month. Donations can be brought the day before or on the day. The pantry can handle any kind of food product including fresh, frozen, canned or dried.

For Thanksgiving, food will be accepted on the preceding Saturday. Sixty-five baskets are being made up to give away.

Donations can also be dropped off anytime at Newton's Guest House on Spruce Run Road off Hill Road. The pantry serves 50-100 families year round.

For information, call 537-4113 or 537-7062.

NORWESCAP Food Bank in Phillipsburg is accepting donations for the holidays at its warehouse at 201 North Broad St. Mondays through Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and on Fridays and Saturdays from 9 to 11:30 a.m. For drop-off hours preceding Thanksgiving, call 454-4322, ext. 104. NORWESCAP distributes food to pantries in Hunterdon, Warren and Sussex counties.