

Article 22.

Calvary Food Pantry: How the Food Bank of CNY supports us — and you

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As most people living in Auburn know, there is history right around each corner and fork in the road. My pantry has been part of a historic 199-year-old church, on a significant cross road, called Five Points, for 30 years. From this church, I have planned my mission. I show no favoritism in the political zeal to qualify who is a “hungry” person, whether he or she is homeless, working two jobs but the SNAP money (food stamps) runs out by the third week, well-educated but not solvent, down but not out, displaced, living on a fixed income, or suddenly disabled. Whatever it is, when food cannot be put on the table, my pantry is ready to help. I feed anyone who comes through the doors, even if they are not in my geographic area. I feed all and then refer them, if necessary, to their home site pantry. That is my mission.

In this historical and traditional town, I have tried to explain how I do this with my newspaper dialogues. You have all learned that I am helped immeasurably by my RSVP volunteers, my supportive businesses like the Auburn Lowe's, Wal-Mart and Panera Bread, foundations, the fellowship of individuals in the seven churches who take on so many tasks for me. Then there is the Food Bank of Central New York, whose deliveries make my mission possible. I have partnered with them since the early 1990s.

The Food Bank of Central New York is a not-for-profit organization working to eliminate hunger through nutritious food distribution, education through nutrition classes here at the pantry, and advocacy. They are the primary food supplier for 252 emergency food programs in our 11-country service region in central and northern New York. The CNY Food Bank is constantly striving to work with retail and grocery businesses to provide wholesome food to its partners, like me. Due to its vendor agreements, the CNY Food Bank can purchase high-demand food, as items for my pantry, and then offer it to all of us at cost. This means my food budget, while constantly changing, goes further.

Furthermore, we also participate in another of the CNY Food Bank's programs. It has a Produce Rescue Program of donated produce and available for us as a shared maintenance fee. Produce as vegetables and fruit, breads and dairy products are picked up daily from local grocers by the bank and then delivered to their participating partners, like me, once a week. With their help I can place a great deal of healthy food, such as fruits and vegetables, on my large racks that are centrally located. The racks are filled by my RSVP volunteers. I, then, can invite my guests to take as much food and produce as they need, for free.

The Food Bank of CNY is my Hero for Hunger this month. Thank you.

NEWS: Garden planting is getting under way at the Fraatz-Crofut Home across the street. We will be pleased to offer vegetables this summer to our guests. Anyone who wants to participate and help, please call me at (315) 252-7772.

Our next fundraiser is from 4 to 10 p.m. Wednesday, May 6, at Denny's, 176 Grant Ave. Twenty percent of the proceeds will benefit the food pantry.
Remember: Volunteer, donate or reciprocate in kind, by giving back.