

Article 25

Calvary Food Pantry: Thirty years of helping the hungry

Nancy Sheffield | Special to The Citizen Jul 25, 2015

For 30 years I have been helping the community of Auburn from this historic church. I am so pleased that this is my 25th article with everyone. I think I have explained, in these dialogues, most challenges that I have had to undertake in these 30 years as executive director. For instance, providing food through the CNY Food Bank, services, fundraising and overseeing the pantry's daily operations are part of my duties. We are at a milestone. Very few people in the country have survived to this point. In this era of continual wretchedness with neverending political confrontations and wherewithals, let me tell you what is exceptional about Calvary Food Pantry:

- Everyone is greeted with respect.
- No one is turned away for a meal, even though their food pantry is elsewhere.
- My large, all-encompassing food racks offer fresh produce and are open to anyone living in my area.
- The pantry is distinctive because we also provide services and referrals that are irreplaceable: one-stop-shopping for people who are in crisis and in relentless despair. Services here, on a weekly basis, are: SNAP NOEP (food stamps), health insurance representatives like United Health and Fidelis Health, and most recently, booklets for the Cayuga County Healthy Women's Partnership (that I used for 11 years, as I had no insurance). It provided me with breast and cervical screening. Anyone can take advantage of the county health screening for cancer for women 40 to 64 years of age with limited or no health insurance, and colorectal screening for both men 50 and older and women with limited or no insurance.
- Nutrition educators from Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Food Bank of Central New York come in and offer nutritional cooking classes and demonstrations with foods we have to promote healthy eating, with recipes. Last week it was spinach with blackeyed peas, beans and tomato salad. The recipe is available here at the pantry. Have you a special recipe you can send us?
- We strive to be up to date providing services in the event of a power outage or catastrophe, such as a tornado. In September 2013, we applied for a grant from Cayuga County Community Fund, a part of a Cayuga County Health Department grant. George Wilson, as our chairman, secured the funds in June for a \$4,100 generator. This project took two years to achieve. Calvary Food Pantry had to come up with the money for the installation. E&V Energy was the best estimate of many, and fit our budget at \$2,750 for a total of \$6,850.
- On the Web, my Heroes for Hunger articles will be posted by August.

PANTRY GARDEN NEWS: We are pleased to announce that we plucked some small tomatoes from the garden across the street at the Faatz-Crofut Home and the beans the St. Joseph School

first-graders planted are still blooming but need heat now, not rain, to grow; the Swiss chard, cucumbers and lettuce are growing nicely. I am pleased with the progress this year.

Susan May, a talented music teacher in the area and her music students are putting on a show at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 29 in the church sanctuary. There is a \$5 donation for our benefit. The show is called "Swinging with the Thirties" to celebrate 30 years of my pantry's success. Bring a friend.

Volunteer, donate or reciprocate in kind, by giving back.