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Calvary Food Pantry: How First Love and King Ferry pantries help the hungry

Nancy Sheffield | Special to The Citizen Aug 22, 2015

I told you last month that I am in my 30th year here in this historic church, in the middle of this distinguished, deep-rooted family town, at a historic crossroad called Five Corners. Yes, my pantry is one of the oldest pantries in Auburn, and I am blessed with exceptional volunteers who help me run it smoothly. Everyone is committed to helping the people who desperately need us in these times of great crisis. I earned the honor to discuss these Heroes for Hunger dialogues as executive director. Please note, I use “my pantry” in my conversations with the citizens of Auburn, because there would be no pantry without me. Does this answer those who wonder why I say “my pantry” in these discussions? “I” hope so.

I consider it a privilege to be having a dialogue with all of you each month, thanks to The Citizen’s Lake Life editor, David Wilcox, who has from the first Heroes for Hunger dialogues listed the pantries in Auburn and the surrounding area. I had thought, initially, Auburn citizens could tear the list out of the newspaper, put it on the refrigerator and remember every time they look at it that all pantries listed there always need help. CNY Food Bank grants, private individuals, businesses and some government help serve only as a stepping stone because of the constant striving for more funds needed in this era of government restraint on its most vulnerable citizens. It seems this list is also the first of its kind in America. Thank you, David!

But I would be remiss if I excluded the other pantries from my conversations with the community. On the first Tuesday of each month, at First Love Ministries Food Pantry on Wall Street, a group of dedicated individuals gather to discuss how best to feed the hungry in our area, and this group is called the Food Providers Network. Hence, I thought I would tell you about two of my colleagues' pantries and how they support the community, and I will be continuing next month spotlighting others.

- First Love Ministries Food Pantry, 151 Wall St., Auburn (serving Auburn’s northwest area and Brogan Manor), is open for walk-in from 1 to 2:30 p.m. Mondays and Fridays, and by appointment Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Call Lorraine, the director, at (315) 252-4164. They have a soup kitchen at 99 Wall St. from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. They feed from 50 to 80 people a day. All food is provided by the Central New York Food Bank.

“We are called a Matthew 25 Church, with 80 people supporting our efforts by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and prisons, as part of our ministry,” Lorraine said.

- King Ferry Pantry, 8703 Route 90, King Ferry, can be reached at (315) 497-2049. Debbie, the director, coordinates an outreach with Good Shepherd Catholic Community for migrant workers called the 2015 Migrant Farm Workers Service Project for seasonal farm workers who harvest our fruits and vegetables and then must travel in search of more work.

Additionally, the pantry created the Southern Cayuga schools' BackPack Program for students identified by their schools as being at risk for hunger on the weekends. The food is light enough for a child to carry, and easy to prepare. The pantry's goal is the children returning on Monday being better prepared to learn, and each BackPack helps increase their chances for future academic success.

News from our garden at The Faatz-Crofut Home: A significant amount of beans the first-graders at St. Joseph School planted are just being picked, with lots more still growing. Cucumbers, peppers and tomatoes are sprouting well.

News from the pantry: Our Fall Fundraiser is 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 5, with our outstandingly delicious chicken barbecue. Call the pantry for tickets.

Reminder: A celebration for the pantry's 30th year will be at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 29. Susan May and her music students will perform a show here in the church sanctuary called "Swinging with the Thirties" There is a \$5 dollar donation.

Finally: Have you ever thought about children at risk here in Auburn during the summer months? The schools do a fine job of feeding children during the school year, with breakfast, if needed, and lunch. What about the summer? Well, Genesee Elementary School at 244 Genesee St. has each day during the week this summer a place where both children and adults can eat lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. They fed 71 people on Wednesday. Call Barb Loomis at (315) 253-7862 for more information.

Thank you everyone. Volunteer, donate or reciprocate in kind by giving back.