

Article 29

Sheffield: The Citizen's efforts make it a Hero for Hunger

Nancy Sheffield | Special to The Citizen Dec 13, 2015

I look forward to the Christmas season because I can thank those individuals who help me with their continual and steadfast support. This monthly conversation with the citizens of Auburn is my 28th article. They have grown far beyond the perimeters that I expected when I started them.

Initially, I wanted people to understand that hunger is all around us, an unseen constant often driven by despair and desolation. People have strong opinions about the subject of hunger, often preferring it be swept away as a simple annoyance or someone's else's problem. I have spent 30 years trying to change preconceived ideas, so my initial goal for the articles was to showcase what we do here at the pantry and relay it into terms that are understandable.

From the first article, I would not have accomplished anything — no dialogue, no representation of a voiceless group of people, no knowledge of what is going on here at the pantry — without the help of David Wilcox, The Citizen's Lake Life editor. David allowed us to showcase our efforts. David has been turning a spotlight on the pantry's challenges each month, and they are having a communal impact. They are being discussed — one of my goals. Additionally, so I have been told, the list of other pantries David created in the Auburn area is unique and useful. The community can easily donate to any Auburn pantry this coming year, one of my wish lists for Christmas. See David's list of pantries with this column. That is what David has done for me. You are to be congratulated, David. You are a Hero for Hunger, this and every month.

Thanks this Christmas go to my volunteers. I depend, deeply, on my 50 volunteers help, with a majority from RSVP. Day in and day out, all year long. They step up to help me.

We serve food to approximately 150-200 families a month. It is a mammoth task getting five days' worth of food ready from our pantry and freezers. Upon entering the pantry, each family chooses what they want to eat from our choice sheet that encompasses all food groups and is determined by the CNY Food Bank. My volunteers then fill plastic bags with food in an organized manner. Each family member gets enough food for three meals for five days, depending on the family size. (A family of six gets more eggs, for instance.) All volunteers share a common goal: To help those people in crisis and, often, despair. My volunteers' wonderful work makes my pantry thrive. All told this year, we will have provided approximately 111,360 meals to 2,502 households and 7,426 individuals by Christmas.

Additionally, my thanks go out to the volunteers who created an emergency response plan that the community needed. Our pantry is designated a food supplier for the community. It is currently in place with a great deal of work, coordination and expertise. We received a generator from the Community Fund of CNY and raised the money to get E&V to put it in.

Merry Christmas. Volunteer, donate or reciprocate by giving in return to any one of the pantries listed with this article.