

Woodstock Pantry ENews Brief

17 December 2023

We served 309 people this weekend. We have been working hard to keep up with the persistent increase in demand. We are not alone experiencing this rising tide.

OREGON FOOD BANK

In 2023, we experienced increased need in our communities, largely fueled by the end of COVID-era Emergency SNAP benefits, layered on top of the persistent and systemic scourge of income inequality, lack of affordable housing and healthcare and systemic racism and racial discrimination.

Simultaneously, food supply decreased from pandemic levels, leaving many Partner Agencies struggling to meet the needs of our communities. **Many of you have broken records in the number of clients you've served in the last few months.** Data suggests that Oregon and SW Washington are on track to serve more than 1 million clients through food assistance sites in 2023, up from 800,000 last year.

At Woodstock Pantry and Woodstock Hot Meals, we are fortunate as we are a **TEFAP** (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) site. This means we get food in addition to that available to other pantries. So, we always have enough for our neighbors.

But the socio-economic conditions that impoverish people reign unabated.

Medical debt nearly pushed family into homelessness. Millions more at risk (OPB)

Kayce Atencio used to be haunted by a thought while working at a homeless shelter in downtown Denver. "It could have been me," said Atencio, 30, who lives in a small apartment with his son and daughter not far from the shelter.

It nearly was. Atencio and his children for years slept on friends' couches or stayed with family, unable to rent an apartment because of poor credit. A big reason, he said, was medical debt. Atencio had a heart attack at 19, triggered by an undiagnosed congenital condition. By 25, he'd declared bankruptcy.

Across the country, medical debt forces legions of Americans to make painful sacrifices. Many cut back on food, take on extra work, or drain retirement savings. For millions like Atencio, the health care system is threatening their very homes.

COMMUNITY

Last week, I shared the story of our community. You can find the video here [Fighting Hunger & Loneliness Through Community: The Woodstock Pantry Story](#). This week a volunteer sent me another story of community that celebrates how easy it is to build community. [Swedish city combats winter loneliness with "say hello" campaign](#)

In Luleå, where darkness dominates, a simple 'hello' becomes a sign of belonging. The 'Säg hej!' campaign, like a flicker of light, seeks to thaw the chill of isolation and foster connections. Luleå champions community and human relationships with a simple gesture, a 'hello', offering warmth to thaw the winter freeze.

It warmed my heart to know that it is our practice to say, 'Hello' to our neighbors!

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OUR VOLUNTEERS ARE GIFTED & SHARE THEIR GIFTS!

Thomas works in both our Hot Meals and Pantry programs! He and his family made a gingerbread house with a special focus. It's the pantry! I love the bags of groceries! Thanks Thomas!



YOU ARE APPRECIATED!

Once again, a neighbor pulled me aside this weekend to tell me how much she appreciates all the hard work everyone does and the wonderful food that she can put on her table! You do work hard. Many times, we don't even have a chance to take a break as things move so quickly. It's important to know that you are appreciated! And, here's a card we got from one of our neighbors, Richard.

Victoria, Chris, Kristen, Tim,
Wayne, Kathy, Rebecca and to
everyone else whose name I
have misplaced in my brain or
mangled:

Each of you does this for
your own reason, but the impact
of your service, collectively, is
huge.

It is, I imagine, after thankless
work - please know you are
indeed thanked (sometimes
formally and in writing, no less).

Not only for your time, but for
the consistent kindness and
patience shown to everyone
every week. Makes a difference.

Merry Xmas to you and yours,
with gratitude, Richard
A special thank you for those plank-
based burgers you occasionally get

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SIGN UP FOR SHIFTS

We are closed next weekend, December 22-23.

However, **we are open the following weekend, December 29-30**. And, we have some openings. As our youth and young adults are mostly gone, we are depending on the rest of us to get the food out! Please join us!

[WP SIGN UP SHEET DECEMBER](#)

ARE YOU MISSING A JACKET?

Very nice Itex Medium black jacket. A volunteer left it a couple weeks ago. It's in the office. Let me know if it's yours!

WE ARE BREAKING GROUND!

Our contractor will break ground for our new pantry this week! It's so exciting to finally start the build! We are all anticipating working out of our new pantry. And, I have more good news!

GRANTS & DONATIONS

RACC Grant We learned yesterday that we have been awarded a RACC (Regional Arts & Culture Council) Grant! Juan Pablo Gonzalez, or just Pablo, is a wonderful Portland muralist who will paint a mural on our new pantry. His work is phenomenal! You can see his work at Pablosmurals.com

New Seasons We learned this week that New Seasons accepted our application to become a beneficiary for their donations. And we got our first gift certificate from them! I had a blast buying 30lbs of butter for Hot Meals! I anticipate we will continue to get donations from them.

I have submitted several other proposals and applications and will continue to do so. And many people have gifted generously to the build. However, we still have a way to go to pay for our new pantry?! So, we have a bit more work to do!

THE WOODSTOCK PANTRY FUNDRAISER & FRIENDRAISER

It's the end of the year, and people and businesses are looking for tax deductible donation opportunities. We are a nonprofit, so they can get a deduction by supporting our pantry build.

You can ask people to join us by:

1. contributing on our [gofundme.com](https://www.gofundme.com) page, or with this QR code
2. and sharing this request with their colleagues, friends and family as well as community organizations and businesses (add to your social media, send emails, make calls).



THANK YOU!!!!

Celebrate...

It Takes a Community, And We Are It!