

## Woodstock Pantry ENews Brief

22 April 2023

This week we served 253 people. We didn't have produce this week. And our neighbors were so gracious about it! They said they appreciated the food we provide and were supportive of us! Cool, huh?! Thank you all for working so hard to provide food and create community with and for our neighbors!

### SHIFTS & VOLUNTEERS

We had full shifts again this weekend! I love it! It takes such pressure off volunteers and allows the teams to excel in their work and have fun. Thanks so very much!!! We welcomed Diane, John's wife, as a new volunteer! So, we have a new dynamic duo! Thanks so much and we look forward to working with you going forward!

### BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE PROGRAM

I've been sharing about our efforts to secure funding for the pantry build. Herein, I will share thoughts regarding our program development.

**Outreach Coordinator Team** – I've stated in previous Briefs that none of us should be irreplaceable (as workers). Each irreplaceable worker is a weak link in our program. Right now, my position is the weak link, we are developing an Outreach Coordinator Team. Chris and Bob are training to work together to handle the Outreach Coordinator duties when I'm gone, and perhaps cover some duties while I'm here. We are creating this team now, so expect a learning curve!

Chris will be with you next weekend to support you all while I'm on vacation. Thanks so much, Chris, for stepping up to do this! She knows that the shifts have fantastic teams with incredible leads who know their stuff.

**Empowerment** - In many offices I've worked in over the years, hoarding power is normal and institutionally sanctioned. I'm sure many of you have experienced this. It's commonly called 'management', and even worse 'leadership'. But that approach is the exact opposite of leadership. And, if it can actually be called management, it is poor management!

My career focused, in large part, on researching, teaching and writing about leadership. I'd like to share a few tidbits here, because I envision a much different place and experience for us than that which we experience in the typical workplace.

First, the more empowered each person is to do their work, the more successful they will be and the more their work will provide the benefits they seek. Also, empowering individuals has a cumulative effect. The more people who are empowered, the stronger the program is, the more flexible we are to create and adopt improvements, the more capable we are to respond to the inevitable issues that challenge us, etc.

Second, the word 'empowerment' is commonly misused in the workplace so many have come to believe it's just talk, not actually possible. To that, I would challenge you to look at people in your shift. Look at how you all are actively engaged, stepping up to do the normal work and, importantly, to figure out and respond to problems. Empowerment can be real, and we are doing it.

Third, we manage systems and processes. We aspire to create a topnotch food pantry with first-class customer service. Additionally, we have contractual relationships with OFB and the federal government wherein we agree to certain practices in exchange for free food. So, all of us need to learn and implement our systems and processes. While the Team Lead tries to keep a birds-eye view of the entire operation, every volunteer

## Woodstock Pantry ENews Brief

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needs to understand their role and the relationship of that role with others. The more a volunteer understands the big picture, the more enabled they are to make vision-directed, values-based decisions.

Fourth, we do **not** manage people. We do provide leadership to people. That means our Team Leads are responsible for making sure people understand their work, engaging people with work they like to do, empowering people to do their work, supporting people to be successful in their work, building community and celebrating our efforts.

Finally, I know these practices run counter to what most of us have experienced in the workplace. So, it can be hard to adjust to this different way of working together. That's okay. As long as we are consciously moving toward our vision, we will continually learn and improve. That's what matters. So, keep striving to our vision, support each other and give each other grace when we fall.

OK – that's it for now!

### SIGN UP FOR SHIFTS

Please sign up for your shifts for next week. It's really important that you sign up, even if you regularly work a shift. If you don't sign up, I look for people to fill the shift. Then, when you show up, we end up with too many people on the shift and not enough on the other shifts. So, please sign up!!!

**Also note** that I've made a new sign up sheet that covers next week and all of May. The April sign up sheet is now disabled.

[May Sign Up Sheet](#)

### TRAINING

Training is an annual requirement for all volunteers.

1. **Seasoned Volunteers** - it's time to renew your training!
2. **New Volunteers** - Please complete your training prior to your shift.
3. **New Volunteers who have already completed training** - Please complete the FIFO training.

I updated all the Shift Instructions. **We all need to read them and sign off** (see *First-In, First-Out* training below). Please work to integrate the new/improved practices into your routine. Building a practice requires conscious effort. So, check the Shift Instructions (in the volunteer binder) each week until you consistently incorporate the new practices into your work!

Click on the links to get to the training. After you complete the training, click on the [Volunteer Training Log](#) link to document that you have completed the training.

1. People working **all shifts** need to view the [Oregon Food Bank Food Safety Video](#) (16 minutes).
2. People who work the **Distribution shift** need to view the [Client Civil Rights & Confidentiality Video](#) (20 minutes). I encourage everyone to view it, even if you don't work the Distribution shift, as it introduces our philosophy and values regarding our neighbors.

## Woodstock Pantry ENews Brief

22 April 2023

3. Everyone needs to complete ***First-In-First-Out*** training for the shifts you work. They are included in the Shift Instructions. You will find links to your Shift Instructions on the [Volunteer Training Log](#). (10 minutes).

### PROGRAM EVALUATION

Each year, we will conduct a program evaluation to learn how we are doing and ways in which we can improve. For the next few weeks, volunteers are talking with our neighbors to get feedback on our work. Thanks to Bill and Julie for help this week! We'll use that data to make improvements. I'll share that data with you.

### PLANNING FOR SUMMER

I'm planning now for summer at the pantry. We have learned that we need 5 people for Receiving; 10 for Packing; and 8 for Distribution (Friday and Saturday).

At this point, we are really short on volunteers for Saturday Distribution.

If you haven't already, please let me know your availability over the summer so that I can ensure we are not short-handed. Respond to me personally with answers to these questions. Thanks!

1. Do you plan to volunteer at WP this summer (June - September)?
  - a. If yes, please continue...
2. What shifts do you plan to work (Receiving, Packing, Friday or Saturday Distribution)?
3. What dates will you NOT be available?
4. How often do you plan to volunteer?

### Celebrate...

**It Takes a Community, And We Are It!**