

Woodstock Pantry ENews Brief

21 October 2023

We served 286 people this week, 20 more than last week. We ran out of both produce and dry goods bags. **As demand is continuing to grow, I've increased the number of people in each shift so that we can get the work done and still enjoy our work! Please check the new numbers on the sign-up sheet.**

GROCERY BAGS

We now use 560 bags a week. Our call for help has been producing wonderful results! Volunteers, parishioners and neighbors are bringing in the bags! Thank you! **Now, please** make it a practice to bring us your bags and tell your friends to save them!

HOLIDAY PLANNING

We will host our second **Community Share** on November 25 to provide food, clothing and hygiene items to our unhoused neighbors. We have enough volunteers for the 25th.

We also need volunteers for Friday, 24, 9-11, to fill Ready-to-Eat bags. Please let me know if you can help!

PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOL STRIKE

Let's prepare to serve more people for a period of time.

from Oregon Food Bank

The Portland Association of Teachers' union (PAT) may strike starting October 30th. All school food pantries and free food markets located at Portland Public Schools (PPS) buildings will be closed until the strike ends.

This could impact 9 weekly school food pantries and 3 monthly Free Food Markets. OFB is establishing pop-up distributions to accommodate PPS students and families. However, OFB anticipates that families will need to visit other pantries during the strike. OFB created a list of agencies to serve PPS families.

Your agency, i.e., Woodstock Pantry, is on this list.

Starting the week of October 30th, or whenever the strike begins, we might see an increase in shoppers. I'll keep you informed as I learn more.

TAKE ACTION TO PROTECT FOOD SOURCES!

Submitted by Kathy Lee

The Oregon Food Bank (OFB) held an information program to discuss the **Federal Farm Bill**. This legislation is debated periodically and controls the U.S. Department of Agriculture's programs. One program that impacts food distribution is S.N.A.P. (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). **One in six Oregonians has, at one time, used SNAP benefits (it used to be called the "Food Stamp" program). That amounts to the current population of Portland!**

The U.S. Congress decides which people are eligible for SNAP benefits. As the law currently stands, some people are excluded, regardless of having low income, including all DACA people, some college students, all folks holding student visas and migrant workers. OFB is fighting to get these restrictions removed.

The encourage Oregonians to contact our two members of the U.S. House of Representatives who serve on the Agricultural Committee, i.e., Lori Chavez-DeRemer

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R-OR6 and Andrea Salinas D OR-5. OFB is urging these legislators to make SNAP available to more Oregonians.

The extra SNAP benefits available during the COVID pandemic ran out last March. This partly accounts for the increases in demand we have seen at Woodstock Pantry. There is also the 'childcare cliff'. Childcare funding had been part of the American Rescue Plan for the last three years. This assistance to childcare providers expires soon and will result in the closure of 70,000 childcare centers/programs across the country!

Parents of the 3.2 million children who lose access to childcare face may have to quit their jobs to stay home with the children. With less money, more families will be looking to local food pantries to help.

OFB urges everyone to sign a petition to the Oregon Legislature urging action to help feed people. secure.oregonfoodbank.org/a/protect-snap

THE COLLISION...OR IS IT COLLUSION...OF IRONIES

The irony of my trip to the food stamp office today does not escape me.

Nor does the fact that, on my journey to confront this next assault on my ego, I got lost in a neighborhood lined with brass fences and golden trees, sentinels for million-dollar homes tucked amidst ornamental lawns.

How is it, I wonder, that a woman with twenty years professional experience and three advanced degrees finds herself running this particular errand, this day?

I asked the food stamp worker about his day.
He was thinking about food shopping.
This irony also did not escape me.

So I sat, holding back the threatening deluge of tears, watching as the worker completed my paperwork.
Now, I wait for another week to find out if I qualify.

What does a family without food do during this wait?
Are they standing on street corners with cardboard 'Anything will help. God bless.' placards?

Or are they at work or school, ignoring the hunger pains and hoping no one hears the incessant growling of stomachs filled only with emptiness?

I wrote this poem in 2013, as my bank account neared \$0 and as the specter of homelessness cast its menacing shadow over me. I share the poem because I learned in that terrifying time of my life that any one of us can face this unthinkable future...no matter our current fortune or privilege or well-being.

So, it is with a humble and grateful heart that I contribute to our work together, knowing that at any time any of us can stand on either side of the table, and dedicated to serving our neighbors with dignity, respect and honor.

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PANTRY BUILD

PantryRaising – We are raising our new pantry! And just as with the time-honored barn raising, it will take a community to realize our dream of creating a sustainable source of food for our community. We have raised a lot of money to build the new pantry, but still need more. So, we are initiating a fundraising campaign. Watch for information about how you can help with our PantryRaising, coming soon!

SIGN UP FOR NOVEMBER SHIFTS

Remember to sign up for the weekend by Thursday so we can plan. Also, if you can't come, please take your name off the sign-up sheet and contact me right away! Otherwise, people think the shift is full and don't sign up. Thanks!

[WP SIGN UP SHEET NOVEMBER](#)

I've closed the October sign up sheet. Please go to our new [signup sheet!](#)

Celebrate...

It Takes a Community, And We Are It!