

Local Food Pantries: Here to Help and in Need of Volunteers

Local food pantries are feeling the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, experiencing increased numbers of those in need and a need for more volunteers. In the areas covered by this newspaper, these pantries are located in Albion, Edinboro, Fairview, and Girard. In general, each pantry serves specific zipcodes (primarily aligned with school districts).

Distribution days are the first and third Thursdays of every month between the hours of 1:00 and 5:00 p.m. For the safety of clients and volunteers, changes have been made to the process and temporarily to the distribution location. **The May 7th distribution will be held at the Girard Alliance Church, 229 Rice Avenue, Girard.** Those in need should enter the church's south parking lot and will be directed to drive around the back of the building. Registration and distribution will be at the church's north entrance and recipients will exit the north lot.

“With our next distribution, we will be providing Second Harvest boxes rather than packing our own bags,” said Christian Cupboard director Bev Phillips. “These boxes weigh about 25 pounds, and we are really going to need more help. Many of our regular volunteers are older and either reluctant to expose themselves to personal contact, or they do not have the physical strength to spend a couple of hours carrying boxes.”

Volunteers are needed between 1:00 and 5:00 p.m. All work is done on the first and third Thursdays of the month. Volunteers generally work a two-hour shift. The Christian Cupboard needs your help--can you give two hours once or twice a month to help your friends and neighbors in need? Please call the First Presbyterian Church office between 9 a.m. and noon, 774-3985, with your contact information to volunteer.

For those who need help, even if this need is only temporary, if you've lost your job and/or your income has been severely reduced, food pantries are here to help. For the Christian Cupboard those in need should come to the pantry between 1:00 and 5:00 on the first or third Thursday of the month. Please bring your photo ID and proof of address (such as a current utility bill) to register.

Director Bev Phillips said, “No one should go hungry during the COVID-19 pandemic. With school closures, job disruptions, and health risks, many will turn to food banks for much-needed support. People who never needed help before need it now. We are here to help for those with temporary needs for as long as they need that assistance.”

In this time of uncertainty, the network of local leaders is working to ensure that this pandemic does not perpetuate inequity or deepen the burdens often borne disproportionately by low-income people. This moment in history is an opportunity to illuminate how we are all affected when some of us lack the protections of a safety net. By focusing on the needs of people most impacted, we can better ensure the health and safety of all communities.