Food Pantry Network News

Midland County Emergency Food Pantry Network

Our Vision: "Always Food in Every Home"

September 2016

Another School Year Begins for the BackPack Buddies Program

Planning is already under way as EFPN will once again coordinate and fund the Backpack Buddies Program. For the school year 2015-2016, approximately 600 children in 12 elementary schools received this weekend supplement of food. All Midland County elementary school children will receive information regarding the Backpack Buddies Program with their start-of-school paperwork. Children who receive free or reduced price lunches are eligible for the backpack program. Once the forms come back, our Backpack Buddies Program coordinator, Debra Ahn, will work with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan (FBEM) to determine the allotment of items for each school. Items included can be used for breakfast, lunch, dinner,



and a snack. There is no cost for children, their families or schools to participate in this program. EFPN also provides a piece of fruit once a month into each backpack. Because of a grant from Chemical Bank and our ability to purchase low cost USDA peanut butter from the FBEM, we were also able to provide a jar of peanut butter seven different times during the school year. Many schools have switched to plastic grocery bags rather than the backpacks to help control program costs and to ensure that students receive food regardless of whether they remember to return their back-

packs on Monday. Many children and their families have come to rely on this extra food for the weekend. One mother noted that the food helped her whole family over a weekend when their food supply was low.

We think about one third of eligible children participate in the backpack program. Even though every Midland County elementary school family should have received information about the program, we have started an initiative to reach qualifying families through other means like our mobile pantries and regular pantry programs.

We successfully piloted a backpack program with two classes of Head Start children last spring. As a result of the successful pilot, we will continue to include these Head Start classes this school year. We are looking to expand to other Head Start classes and also are looking at including low income children who are enrolled in the Great Start Readiness Program. Expansion is not just a matter of having the monetary support, though that is very important, but also having the school personnel and volunteers to implement this program in their schools.

This past summer we did a backpack program for around 200 children at West Midland Family Center, Coleman Railway Center and North Midland Family Center. For many of these children, the food was offered as an incentive as part of a summer reading program.

We would not be able to keep this program going without all the volunteers involved, including the staff of all the Midland County schools and community volunteers, and the financial support of many, including grants for the 2015-2016 school year from The Dow Chemical Foundation, The James R and Anita Horne Jenkins Foundation and the Midland Kiwanis Foundation. We are projecting the cost for a backpack this coming year will be around \$83.00 per child which translates to \$58,100 for 700 children.

The BackPack Buddies Program is a testament to many resources coming together to make a difference in the lives of our children. As Marian Wright Edelman, an activist for children's rights, said, "If we don't stand up for children, then we don't stand for much."

Reflections

- * An elderly grandmother gained custody of her young grandchildren sooner than she thought she would. She was not to get her social security check for two more weeks and had no food and no money to buy food.
- * A young father was taking care of his children while the mother was in the hospital recovering from emergency surgery. He said there was no food in the house. He also said he did not know how to cook. Besides food, he was happy to get gift certificates to buy milk and eggs. He said he did know how to make scrambled eggs.
- * A young mother who is very ill, took in her brother's young son because the brother was in rehab. The little boy's mother is not around. This young mother is the only stable person in his life and she did not want him to go to foster care. She said I do not have much but because of the food pantry we have food in the house. said knowing she can get food relieves the stress. When she was told we would help her for as long as she needed us, she said "I can't talk. Thank you food pantry. I love you".

Our Pantries

EFPN has eight pantries located throughout Midland County. This article will highlight our Sanford pantry.

Spotlight on the Sanford Pantry



The Sanford Pantry was started in the early 80's by the adult Sunday school class at Sanford United Methodist Church. This class decided to help a local family as a mission project. A family had been referred to the church by the Salvation Army. The father had been injured in an accident and was unable to work. The mother had to take him into Midland daily for physical therapy. There were two children. The Sunday school class helped the family with tires for their van, gas money for the trips into the hospital and enough food for one month. This local mission was so successful that the class decided that they wanted to do this on a regular basis. The Sanford Food Pantry was the result. The Sanford Pantry was invited to join the Emergency Food Pantry Network in 1984. It was and still is, housed in Sanford United Methodist Church. The Pantry is a non client

select pantry and serves on average 4 families a week.

A client of the Sanford Pantry made the following comments:

"First of all I want to thank the Lord for making this service possible and I am thankful for the people who work to make it a comfortable experience. It is hard for me to have to ask for help as it is for many people. I want you at the Sanford United Methodist Church food pantry to know how grateful we are and how much we appreciate your hard work and dedication. We thank you all so much for your efforts in making this a little bit easier for me to do. I truly know what it is like to be down and out at this time in my life. God bless your work."



Midland County Poverty & Alice Population*

Area	House- holds	% Poverty	% Alice
Coleman City	559	16	39
Edenville Township	992	11	19
Geneva Township	439	13	18
Greendale Township	631	11	32
Homer Township	1540	7	14
Hope Township	538	7	25
Ingersol Township	1082	7	19
Jasper Township	459	9	22
Jerome Township	2034	1 <i>7</i>	15
Larkin Charter town- ship	1755	2	8
Lee Township	1563	14	18
Lincoln Township	1025	10	16
Midland Charter Township	772	10	14
Midland City	1 7, 551	13	22
Miles Township	<i>7</i> 80	13	18
Mount Haley Town- ship	636	13	16
Porter Townships	511	13	25
Warren Township	829	12	18

^{*}Data from the United Way Alice Project . Alice: Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed.



Helping Our Recipients with Cooking

EFPN has been looking for ways to help our clients cook. We have in the past distributed cookbooks donated to us by the American As-

sociation of University Women or books leftover from the Ladies of Blessed Sacrament rummage sale. We received a grant from Chemical Bank to provide cookbooks to our clients. We explored a number of options and settled on a cookbook which was written by someone who had received food assistance at one of our pantries. This recipient learned how to stretch her food dollars and wanted to share what she had learned with others. The cookbook is called "Affordable Recipes for Everyone". As the author states in her acknowledgment, "These recipes have taken me through the hardest of times". With the grant, plus funds from our general fund, we were able to purchase enough books to distribute to our food pantry clients over a two month period. Pantry recipients have been thrilled to receive this cookbook that was written with them in mind. We also have a volunteer who is developing trifold pamphlets on fresh vegetables. The trifold includes ways of storing fresh produce, some methods of preservation, as well as simple recipes to prepare the vegetables.

In addition we are partnering with MSU Extension to offer our clients "Cooking Matters At the Store." The MSU instructor meets our recipients at a local grocery store and instructs them on how to read labels, how to select produce and how to make healthy food selections. Participants receive a \$10.00 store gift card and learn how to prepare meals for their families. We also designate some of our Sharing Tree tags for basic cooking supplies. We often find our clients may not have can openers or other cooking utensils such as measuring spoons and cups. Thank you to all who have supported our organization. Without your support we could not expand into these additional food related services.

Thank You Local Businesses. Churches and **Organizations for** Recent Food and **Monetary Donations!**

211 Staff Aldersgate United Methodist

Women **Amazon Smiles Program**

American Association of University Women

American Chemical Society Garden

Assumption Blessed Virgin Mary Parish

Blessed Sacrament Parish

Chapel Lane Presbyterian

Chemical Bank

Church Women United

Church World Services Consumers Energy Midland-

Customer Service Center

Consumers Energy/Gas Serv. Dept. **Dollar Daze**

Dollar Tree

Dow Chemical Facilities

Dow Chemical Employees' Credit Union

First United Methodist Church Gavin & Associates

Jr. Girl Scout Troop 50092 **Kroger's Rewards Program**

Medical Procedures Center Meijer's Simply Give

Memorial Presbyterian Church

Midland Area Community **Foundation Give Local Event**

Midland Church Of The Brethren Midland Civitan Club

Midland County Gobblers-

National Wild Turkey Federation

Midland Daily News Midland High School Chemic Pom

Squad MidMichigan Medical Center

National Association of Letter Carriers, Branch 2317

Poseyville United Methodist Women

Psi lota Xi

QuadGraphics

Realm 30Media

Rite Aid

St John's Lutheran Church

St Timothy Lutheran

The Peter & Dorothy A Solomon **Foundation**

> **Trinity Lutheran Church** Trinseo

United Church Of Christ

Wheeler Rd Church Of Christ

Women of Floyd Church of God

Additional Ways to Help EFPN

You trust us with your food donations, money and volunteer time for which we are very grateful. Below are some other ways you can help us.

amazonsmile

Amazon Smile: AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support EFPN every time you shop at Amazon at no cost to you. Amazon will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible AmazonSmile items to EFPN. In order to get

donations for EFPN you need to shop at http://smile.amazon.com. If you do not have an Amazon account, you need to create one. On your first visit to AmazonSmile (after you have logged into your account), it will have a spotlighted charity, but it will give you the option to choose a charity. Please search for Midland County Emergency Food Pantry Network. If you already have an Amazon account, please go to Amazon Smile and associate your account with the Midland County Emergency Food Pantry Network. Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make on AmazonSmile will result in a donation to EFPN. Please call our office if you have questions, 486-9393.

Kroger's Rewards Program: EFPN is part of the Kroger's Community Rewards program. Choose EFPN when you register your Kroger Card and you will be donating to EFPN every time you shop with no additional cost to you. Kroger will donate a percentage of your qualifying purchases back to EFPN. You need to re-register your Kroger card every year as enrollment expires every April 30. The EFPN Kroger Non Profit Organization Number is 91387. Sign-up requires access to the Internet. If you do not have Internet access, you can call 1-800-Krogers to register. Check out "How You Can Help" on the EFPN website at www.midlandcountyefpn.org to get more details or call the



Thrivent Choice® Program: EFPN is now enrolled as a participating organization in Thrivent



Choice. Thrivent Choice is a charitable grant program that allows eligible Thrivent Financial members to recommend where Thrivent Financial distributes part of its charitable outreach grant funds each year. Eligible Thrivent Financial members can direct available Choice Dollars® to EFPN at any

time. To learn more about Thrivent Choice and direct Choice Dollars®to EFPN , visit Thrivent.com/thrivent choice or call Thrivent at 800-847-4836, and say "Thrivent Choice" when prompted.

Family Fare, Spartan Nash Direct Your Dollars: Family Fare (our local SpartanNash store) is launching a program to help nonprofits. The program is titled Direct Your Dollars tm. Shoppers need to turn in their Family Fare receipts into EFPN. Spartan Nash will give a nonprofit \$1000 for every \$150,000 of receipts turned in. Purchases of tobacco, postage, fuel, gift cards and lottery do not qualify for this program. Receipts can be brought to our office at 503 S Saginaw Rd or turned into any of our eight pantries. They also can be mailed to P.O. Box 2521, Midland, Mi 48641-2521.

EFPN Surveys Our Recipients



Over a course of six months, all EFPN pantries asked their recipients to fill out a survey. We wanted to know how we were doing in the areas of treatment of recipients at the pantries, quantity and quality of the food they received as well as any changes they would like to see us make. The vast majority of our recipients were very pleased with all areas of pantry operations. Over 99% were

happy with the volunteers, over 98% were satisfied with both the amount of food they received and the variety of food and over 97% were happy with having fresh and nutritious items available. Though satisfaction was very high, we are always looking for ways to improve. In the comment section, some asked for more recipes. We are trying to address this issue by providing donated cookbooks, produce recipe sheets, and when possible, purchasing cookbooks geared to low income recipients.

The word cloud was generated from recipients' comments. You will see the words that dominate are thank you. Our volunteers often receive the thankfulness of our recipients. It is you, our donors, who make this all possible, and those thank yous and gratefulness are for you.



Midland County
Emergency Food Pantry
Network

P.O. Box 2521 Midland, MI 48641-2521

www.midlandcountyefpn.org

989-486-9393

Midland County EFPN Locations

Please call before delivering food & supplies to pantries

Bullock Creek Outreach Pantry

at Messiah Lutheran Church 1550 S. Poseyville Rd. (corner of Gordonville Rd.) • 835-7143

Coleman Railway Family Center

4839 N. Coleman Schools Drive • 465-2079

EFPN Warehouse

503 S. Saginaw Rd. • 486-9393

HELP Pantry

at Memorial Presbyterian Church 1310 Ashman St. (use Allen St. entrance) • 835-6759

North Midland Family Center Pantry

2601 E. Shearer Rd. • 689-7770

SAMS Food Pantry

hosted by St. John's Episcopal Church at 503 S. Saginaw Rd. • 631-2260

Sanford Food Pantry

at Sanford United Methodist Church 2560 N. West River Rd. • 687-5353

Wheeler Road Church of Christ Pantry

1123 E. Wheeler Rd. • 835-8559

West Midland Family Center Pantry

4011 W. Isabella Rd. • 832-3256

If you know of anyone in need of food, please have them call 989-486-9393

To learn more about EFPN, visit our website at

www.midlandcountyefpn.org

You can also like us on Facebook



NON-PROFIT

Up Coming Events



FOOD COLLECTION AT MIDLAND BALLOON FESTIVAL

The Midland Balloon Festival will be held September 9-11, 2016 at the Midland County Fairgrounds. As part of the event, attendees are asked to bring a nonperishable food item. There will be trucks on site to collect the food. Have fun at the Balloon Festival while helping your neighbors in need.

MIDLAND AREA CROP WALK

Church World Services will host their annual Crop Walk on Sunday, October 2. The start is at the Midland Center for the Arts. Registration is at 1:15 and the



walk begins at 2:00. EFPN is one of the recipients of the funds generated locally by the Crop Walk. Check https://www.crophungerwalk.org/midlandmi for further details.

MIDLAND'S FAMILY FARE HELPS EFPN

Between August 31 and September 11, store guests who visit the Midland Family Fare, 2026 N Saginaw Rd will have the opportunity to donate \$1, \$5 or \$10 at any checkout lane – and 100 percent of the proceeds will benefit EFPN.

VISIT AN EFPN PANTRY

If you or your group or organization would like to learn more about EFPN or see how a pantry operates, please contact our office at 486-9393. We are happy to give tours.