

Food Pantry Network News

Midland County Emergency Food Pantry Network

Our Vision: "Always Food in Every Home"



November 2015

Community Thanksgiving Food Collection

Thanksgiving is a wonderful holiday. It is a time to be grateful for all that we have. It is also a time to remember those who may be in need of food. On November 22, resources from the Midland community will come together to provide over 425 families with a Thanksgiving meal. This program is a partnership of Aldersgate United Methodist Church, EFPN and the Midland County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The list of recipients is compiled with input from DHS, EFPN and many of the nonprofit agencies in Midland County. To be a part of this event, you may bring your nonperishable food items and personal care items on Sunday, November 22, between 11:00 am and 1:00 pm to Aldersgate United Methodist Church at 2206 Airfield Lane. Many churches in our community are collecting food for this event. If you cannot make it to Aldersgate on November 22, volunteers are available to pick up donations. Please call (989) 839-9879 or (989) 486-9393. The following items are needed:

Food Needs: Canned fruits, vegetables and soup, cereal, spaghetti sauce, noodles, boxed potatoes, rice, dessert mixes, juices, stuffing, Jell-O, pie mixes.

Personal Care Needs: Shampoo, bar soap, deodorant, combs, hair brushes, razor/shaving cream, toilet paper, tooth paste, tooth brushes, laundry detergent.

Cookies: Donations of homemade cookies (labeled and packaged, a dozen per package in sealed plastic bags) would be especially appreciated. At least 425 dozens of cookies are needed.

Cash Donations: We need almost \$10,000 in cash donations to give recipients gift certificates which the families use to purchase perishable foods. Your tax deductible checks should be made payable to: Midland County EFPN, P.O. Box 2521, Midland, MI 48641-2521. Please designate your donation as Thanksgiving Baskets.



This quote from W. J. Cameron, captures the sentiment of the Thanksgiving Program, "Thanksgiving, after all, is a word of action."

Reflections

* A family relocated to Midland from Florida for a new job only to learn there was no job. The family had sold many of their things. They were uncomfortable asking for help but when they realized they could trust EFPN and we would help without asking for anything in return, they were very grateful.

* A man lost his job when the company moved out of the area. This left him dejected. He appreciated the help with food and the kindness shown him and he felt more hopeful after his interaction with EFPN.

* An older woman had to pay for her daughter's funeral expenses which used a lot of her money. She called and said she felt lost and did not know where to turn. EFPN helped her with food. She called the next day and asked if she could repay us because the food meant a lot to her during this difficult time. Clients who ask if they can help us are often told to pay it forward in any way they can.

Reusable Grocery Bag Project



Our manager learned about a food pantry program using reusable grocery bags to make it easier and more convenient to donate food. She decided to bring this idea to EFPN. She piloted the program at a supporting church and found that it was very successful. EFPN wanted to expand the program to other churches. Thanks to the Endowment Committee of St John's Episcopal Church we were given over 1000 bags to use in other churches.

We believe our supporters are very generous. However, with our busy lives, we sometimes forget to bring food to our church collection sites. We also find donors are not always sure what items to buy. These bags serve as a reminder. Each bag has a tag with suggested items. The tags on the bags are customized to each church, naming the pantry they support, the food collection dates or the process for their church, and the church logo. Depending on the church collection schedule, the bags of food are brought to their supporting pantry or picked up by the pantry volunteers, emptied and returned to the church to be used again. These bags make it convenient if you find sale items or buy one get one free offers. You can just add these items to the bag, and collect food as you routinely shop over a period of time. Use of these bags is optional. If you are interested in learning how your church can participate in this reusable bag project, please call our office at (989) 486-9393.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

* The Midland Balloon Festival collected food for EFPN. A family came to our booth and brought some food. The children in the family had received food through the Backpack Buddies Program. The food was needed and appreciated. They no longer needed help and were bringing us a food donation as a way to pay it forward.

* Midland's United Way as part of their "Turning Outward" focus is facilitating a series of meetings on food security issues in Midland County. They have brought together a number of agencies to discuss barriers to getting food, resources available and how we can insure that all in the community have access to healthy food options. In particular the group is focusing on the Alice households, Asset Limited, Income Constrained and Employed, households earning above the poverty level but less than the basic cost of living for the county.

Our Pantries

EFPN has eight pantries located throughout Midland County. This is the third in a series of articles highlighting each of our pantries.

Spotlight on the Bullock Creek Outreach Pantry



Messiah's pantry started as a church pantry when Messiah Lutheran Church was in the building that is now The Rock. The pantry moved to the new church on the corner of Poseyville and Gordonville in 2000. Messiah's pantry became the Bullock Creek Outreach Pantry and joined the Midland County Emergency Food Pantry Network (EFPN) in March of 2003 for centralized coordination of those needing help. The pantry was housed in one of the portable buildings for a few years before moving into a former Sunday school classroom when the new addition was added in 2006. Over time the pantry has been blessed with donations of a refrigerator, an upright freezer, a small chest freezer and closed cabinets for storing the food as well as the generous donation of food.

Volunteers operate the pantry two days a week by appointment through the EFPN Coordinator. The pantry volunteers pack the bags for the clients. Clients receive enough food for a week based on the size of their family. This pantry is one of the four pantries that provides food for the EFPN Senior Delivery program. Messiah Lutheran Church also funds mobile pantries through "Filling Midland's Cup" when there is a month with no EFPN sponsored mobile pantry.

How EFPN Uses Your Monetary Donations

EFPN greatly appreciates all donations of food, personal care and cleaning supplies. However, monetary support is also crucial for our programs and greatly appreciated as well. Last year over 215,000 items were distributed from our eight pantries. Approximately 97,000 of these items were donated. We needed to purchase 118,000 items in order to meet client needs. We are able to stretch your donated dollars by buying food from the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan. We supplement items from the Food Bank with local purchases because the Food Bank does not have all the items needed to stock a pantry. As we all have seen, food costs are going up, even at the Food Bank.

The Backpack Buddies program provides a weekend backpack of food for children who qualify for free and reduced price lunches. For the 2015-2016 school year we have over 640 elementary students enrolled. EFPN purchases the food for this program from the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan. Even though the number of students has decreased from recent years, the cost of each backpack has gone up to around \$2.60/backpack vs. \$2.30/backpack in previous years. We are adding locally purchased fruit once a month to the backpacks. Even though this has increased our costs, we feel having some fruit is important.

The Medical Nutrition program provides gift certificates for a nutritional supplement, like Ensure or Boost, to clients who are referred to us by Cancer Services, Senior Services and DaVita Dialysis. Our cost for this program have gone up because of our expanded Senior Delivery Service. This program also provides vouchers for special more expensive formulas needed by some babies. The 2016 budget for this program is \$15,500. Many of our mobile pantries are funded by churches and individuals. For those that are not, we need additional income to keep this program going.

EFPN also provides clients in our regular and Thanksgiving programs with \$10 or \$20 gift certificates which enables them to buy fresh or perishable items. Last year we distributed almost \$60,000 in gift certificates through these programs. We constantly strive to keep our administrative costs low. We are grateful and honored that our supporters have placed trust in us to make wise use of all donations to help those in need.

Teaming Up for Success

Midland High School's Chemic Pom Squad (MHS POM) and the Midland County Emergency Food Pantry Network (EFPN) are teaming up for a fundraising event to help children. A portion of the funds will go towards supporting the growing MHS POM program's funds. These funds will support the ever increasing cost of high school athletics for students and families in financial need. All children should have an opportunity to participate in high school athletics. Another portion of funds will go towards the EFPN Backpack Buddies Program which provides a weekend backpack of food to children in Midland County Public elementary schools who qualify for free and reduced price lunches. The Food Bank of Eastern Michigan supplies the backpack food for \$80.00 per child per school year. In addition, for every \$1,000 raised before February 12, 2016, MHS POM will volunteer 25 hours worth of work back to EFPN. If you would like to support these two organizations, please go to www.gofundme.com/mhspom and make a donation. If you have questions regarding this fundraiser, please email chemicjvpom@gmail.com, use the contact us on the EFPN website www.midlandcountyeFPN.org or call the EFPN office at (989) 486-9393.



Donate A Deer

EFPN has a partnership with the Chippewa Nature Center. In the fall months, deer that are harvested at the Nature Center are donated to EFPN. EFPN has the deer processed with a U.S.D.A. approved processor, and the venison is given to clients.

EFPN also runs a venison program independently of the Chippewa Nature Center program. Deer can be delivered to 784 South Poseyville Road, Midland or we will pick up any deer within a 50 mile radius of Midland.

To request information or a deer pickup, please call (989) 835-9601. EFPN pays for the processing of the donated deer. We are grateful to the Chippewa Nature Center and hunters for providing venison for our clients.

Thank You Local Businesses and Organizations for Recent Food and Fund Raising Events!

Amazon Smile
American Association of University Women
Blessed Sacrament Faith Formation
Dollar Daze
Holy Family Episcopal Church Community Garden
Kroger's Reward Program
James R. & Anita Horne Jenkins Foundation
LaLonde's Market
Meijer's Simply Give Program
Memorial Presbyterian Church
Midland Area Catholic Community Mission
Midland Balloon Festival
Midland Kiwanis Foundation
Midland R/C Modeler's Club
St. John's Episcopal Church's Endowment Committee
Stanford LP Gas
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
Trinseo
Vendors from Midland's Famers' Market

Sharing Tree Shares Holiday Joy

EFPN participates in the Sharing Tree program run by the United Way of Midland County.



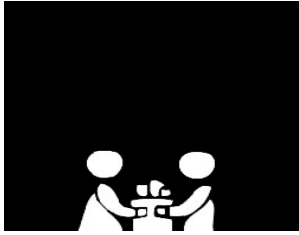
The needs of EFPN are listed on the red tags. The stories are meant to represent typical clients of EFPN. Last year EFPN received over \$6000 in value of items from the Sharing Tree. Typical needs we list are personal care items, popcorn, hot chocolate or kitchen supplies and gift cards for produce, dairy, meat and restaurants. One of our pantry volunteers had a client who had to leave a difficult situation at home and left without taking anything. She wanted to start cooking but had no utensils. Our pantry volunteer knew she had a baking set with baking dishes, measuring utensils and spatulas from a Sharing Tree donor. The volunteer had been saving this wonderful set for just the right person, and there she was. The client was overjoyed to receive the cooking set. Thank you to United Way for coordinating this program and thank you to all who support the Sharing Tree. We often find that donors are very generous and donate more items than requested on the tags. You enable our volunteers to be Santas as they hand out these gifts to our clients.



Girl Scout troop 50721 came to the EFPN office for a tour. They brought some delicious girl scout cookies to give to our clients.

Pantry Representatives Receive Training

In addition to all the work running a pantry, our food pantry representatives are required to take training from the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan. The training includes safety requirements for the storage and distribution of food items and expiration guidelines for food distributed through their pantries. Also, in order to be eligible to give out USDA items, all the pantry representatives and their volunteers are required to take civil rights training every year.



**Midland County
Emergency Food Pantry
Network**

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

www.midlandcountyeftp.org

989-486-9393

**NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MIDLAND, MI
PERMIT NO 181**

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*

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Two Great Concerts - Two Opportunities to
Help Those In Need**



MIDLAND
COMMUNITY
ORCHESTRA

The Midland Community Orchestra, led by new conductor Gina Provenzano, will be having a free concert on **Sunday, November 22, at 3:00 PM** in Central Auditorium, 305 E. Reardon. Attendees are encouraged to bring a food donation to help stock the shelves of EFPN.

The Men of Music, led by Grace Marra, will hold their Christmas concert on Sunday, **December 6** at the First United Methodist Church, 315 W Larkin St., Midland, at **2:00 and 7:00 PM**.

There is no admission charge. A free will donation will be collected with proceeds going to support EFPN. Please come and enjoy the music while supporting those in need.



**Joint Gofundme campaign
(www.gofundme.com/mhspom) with
Midland High School Pom Squad - now till
end of February, 2016**