



Perry County Food Bank

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One of the greatest feelings in the world is knowing that we as individuals can make a difference. Ending hunger in America is a goal that is literally within our grasp. -- Jeff Bridges

As we come into the month of April, we ended up with more people using the food bank in New Bloomfield than last month. We believe some of that may be attributed to the blessing of low-cost hams that we had available to all of our customers for Easter dinners. We also had turkeys available at the start of the month and again at the end as we approached Good Friday when the hams ran out. Snyders United Methodist Church is responsible for kick-starting that program and we thank everyone else who contributed to the purchase of those hams. For March, we served 1,229 households and 2,980 individuals and in February we served 1,196 households and 2,889 individuals.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education has their Summer Food Service Program available again to Perry County. The purpose of the program is to help feed kids in the summer when school breakfasts and lunches are not available and when our Backpack program is not running. If you have a facility that is located in an area where there are school age kids who can get to you or you can transport to your site and you have people who are willing to invest the time to make a difference in these kid's lives we would like to speak with you about this program. You can prepare the food yourselves or we can link you up with a vendor who would prepare the meals and deliver them to you. Your cost for the meals is covered by the grant. The nice thing about this program is that the Department of Education wants to get food into the bellies of kids (their words). If you would want to do this meal program as part of an outreach program or VBS, that is fine. As a matter of fact, the Department has found that the programs that offer activities along with the meal do better than those sites which just offer the food. They also found that churches are some of the best places to have sites because of the caring people who facilitate those programs. We strongly urge churches who are looking for a way to reach out to their community and make a difference in the lives of kids and their families to investigate this program.

Monday, April 18th, we will be trying something new at our New Bloomfield facility. We will be extending our hours to include time in the evening from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. We know that we have customers who cannot get into our facility to shop during our normal daytime hours because they work. It is hoped that the hours will be convenient for people to shop on their way home from work. We have been discussing this possibility for a while and we are now going to give it a try to see what the response will be.

This program will also give people who work during the day and who would like to volunteer at the food bank an opportunity to do so. If you are one of those people, please call us and we will do what we can to accommodate you. If we are not open when you call, just leave a message and let us know when would be a good time to contact you and we will get back to you.

God works in mysterious ways and both of us have dozens of stories that we could share where we were privileged to watch as God stepped in and showed us what He can do if we will let Him. One of those instances is the story we talked about at the start of this newsletter. We purchase a lot of food from the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank in Harrisburg where we are able to purchase food that was donated to them for a nominal cost that covers their storage and handling costs. They have a shopping list that is available to us and it changes hourly, actually, it can change by the minute as more items come into their warehouse and get added to the list. Snyders Church called us one morning and said that they had collected money and wanted to purchase hams for our customers for Easter. Linda took the call and turned to me and asked if we had any preference as to where they purchased them. I turned around and opened the shopping list from Harrisburg. I had looked at it about an hour before and there were no hams available. Now, one hour later, hams were on the list and Snyders could purchase 180 hams instead of the 40 that they would have been able to purchase in a store.

It reminded both of us of fishes and loaves (Matthew 14) and that the One Who was able to multiply them is our boss.

Enjoy the beauty that is beginning to break forth in nature as God resurrects the earth again after a long, but bearable winter.

Linda Bates & John Kiner
Co-directors, Perry County Food Bank