



Perry County Food Bank
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“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

We would say that if you follow Emerson’s advice by being, “useful, honorable, compassionate, and making a difference that you have lived well,” happiness will certainly follow. If you were to stop by the food bank on any day that we are open and speak with any of the volunteers or employees you would find that they will overwhelmingly tell you that they get so much more out of the work that they do than the effort that they need to put into doing that work. Just the feeling of being able to help others and make a difference in their lives brings so much satisfaction that they leave feeling so much better about themselves and they are happy about what they’ve done.

April is National Volunteer month in the United States. The month is a spin-off from the 1,000 Points of Light Program that President George H.W. Bush created in 1991. When people stop in to visit or tour our facility, they always comment about how smoothly things seem to be running. That is a tribute to the many volunteers who show up each day that we are open and jump in and handle the work that needs to be done for the day. It is a real joy for the two of us to know that the volunteers that we have in place can take over and keep things running smoothly in the store with little or no supervision from us.

So, our hats are off to all volunteers this month, not just our own, but also the ones that dedicate so much time to making the lives of people better and safer. The food bank and the food bank distribution sites would not be able to operate without dedicated groups of volunteers at each facility and we, as a society, would be much poorer without volunteers in fire departments, hospitals, and virtually every other non-profit organization.

April is the month that we recertify all of our Senior Box recipients. This is a federal program that gets a prepackaged box of food and a block of cheese into the hands of seniors 60 years or older who meet the income guidelines for the program (Commodity Supplemental Food Program). In many cases this food provides enough supplemental food to see a senior through a month. If they qualify for this program, they are also eligible for the other food bank services such as shopping at the store in New Bloomfield once a month and picking up a pre-packaged box of food at one of our remote distribution sites on the third weekend of the month. These clients have very low incomes, in many cases living only on Social Security.

In February, our numbers were 1,047 households with 28 considered new and 2,478 individuals with 63 being new. In March we served 1,050 households with 44 of them being new and 2,523 individuals with 97 being new.

With April we begin to see warmer weather (hopefully) and we are seeing spring flowers coming to life and providing us with splashes of color against the drab background that winter left behind. Enjoy the colors and let them brighten your days that are growing longer with each passing day.

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