



## Perry County Food Bank

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*"[Do you] Want to keep Christ in Christmas? Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, forgive the guilty, welcome the unwanted, care for the ill, love your enemies, and do unto others as you would have done unto you." — Steve Maraboli*

It can't be December already, can it? Where does the time go? We just finished trying to provide a nice Thanksgiving for our clients and here it is December and we scramble around as we push toward the Christmas holidays. Christmas, with Andy Williams singing, *"It's the most wonderful time of the Year, With the kids jingle belling, And everyone telling you "Be of good cheer", It's the most wonderful time of the year, It's the happiest season of all..."*

That is certainly what Christmas should be all about. But, we look around; we pick up the newspaper; we turn on the television news; we log on to our computers and devices and we find that there is an awful lot going on in this world and we are more likely to sympathize with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in his poem *Christmas Bells* when he wrote on hearing the church bells on Christmas day, "And in despair I bowed my head; "There is no peace on earth," I said; "For hate is strong, And mocks the song Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"

For our clients at the Food Bank the happiest time of the year can take on a sour note when you walk into work at the start of the holiday season and find out that your job, which was going to supply your family's "happy holiday", has been eliminated and you are immediately out of work; or that your spouse or child suddenly dies; or your significant other leaves you as a young mother with children and no means of support; or the report from the doctor contains the "C" word and the diagnosis is not good; or a family member overdoses on an opioid; and the list goes on — and on, and on. These are just some of the things that have been shared with us at the Food Bank just in the last two months.

What can you do when the "rug has suddenly been pulled out from under you" and the world goes from sunny and bright to dismal and dark? The Food Bank stands ready to help, not only with food but with referrals to other agencies which can help and a shoulder to cry on or a listening ear. We try to be a non-threatening place of hope when hope is hard to find. We see a certain irony of placing the Food Bank, a beacon of light and hope, across a parking lot from a prison, a den of darkness and despair.

In the month of November, we served 1,306 households with 62 of those being new and 3,379 individuals and 174 of those were new. In the month of October, our numbers were 1,243 households with 67 considered new and 3,059 individuals with 173 being new.

So, along with Longfellow, we can finish the poem with "God is not dead, nor doth He sleep; The Wrong shall fail, the Right prevail, With peace on Earth, good-will to men." Thank you for helping to keep the light of hope alive for so many in Perry County.

May you and yours have a very Merry Christmas and the Happiest of New Years.

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