



Perry County Food Bank
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The best thing to hold onto in life is each other. – Audrey Hepburn

Congratulations to all of you who have been praying for snow for the last couple of years. You got your prayers answered – big time -- so you can stop now for another year or two and make the rest of us happy. It was interesting that it was just one month late. Last month full moon was on Christmas Eve. On Sunday morning it was full moon and the skies had cleared and the line from Clement Moore's "Twas the Night Before Christmas" was evident before sunrise – "The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow, Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below." It was beautiful – but if you went outside to enjoy it you were knee-deep in the "new-fallen snow."

We are extremely grateful to the county for their association with the food bank. They provide our building and all of the building maintenance. It is especially appreciated when it snows because the county maintenance staff plows the parking lot and they do a great job of making sure that it is open for our customers and that it is safe.

As we started the New Year in January, we had three of our busiest days the first week of the month. As a matter of fact, Wednesday, January 6th was our busiest day ever with 141 families shopping in the five hours that we were open. Our numbers for January were 1,251 households served with 46 of those being new clients and we provided food for 3,101 people. Currently, the Backpack Program is serving 326 kids each weekend and holiday.

The Central Pennsylvania Food Bank has asked us to report the number of pounds of donated food that we get from Weis Markets, Giant Foods, produce that we receive from SpiralPath Farms, and all other food and donated merchandise items. In order to make that process easier, they have provided us with a pallet jack with a scale attached so that we no longer have to weigh each item individually but can weigh whole pallet loads of food. We are very grateful to them for the new jack as well as everything else that they do to make our operation run smoothly.

We read in a recent article in the Harrisburg newspaper that the Food Stamp rules are about to tighten up – again. The last time that this happened, we had a large influx of new people signing up to use the food bank for the first time. We also had a number of past clients who hadn't used our services for several years come and reactivate their files as they weren't able to make ends meet with the drop in their SNAP (Food Stamp) benefits. We are waiting to see how/if this will affect us once these new rules take effect.

We are still waiting for our state monies that were allocated to Perry County for food for the 2015-16 fiscal year. This is still part of the budget fiasco that our legislators and governor were, and still are, embroiled in. By now we should have received three of our quarterly payments and we are still waiting for them. The word is that we should see them by the end of February. Fortunately, we give all of that money to the Central PA Food Bank for the purchase of food from them. Because they know that they are going to be getting the money once it shows up, they have extended credit to us since July. If not for that, we would have been in much worse shape in providing food for our clients than we are.

Thank you for continuing to remember us after the holiday season. As we write this it is supposed to warm up and rain for a week. All of this one week after a record snow storm. Keep warm and look forward to spring in 6 weeks, depending on the Punxsutawney rodent.

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