



Perry County Food Bank

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“We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It’s easy to say, ‘It’s not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.’ Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes.” — Fred Rogers

The world is a scary place. It seems that everywhere we look there is something going on which scares us and causes us concern. Nine inches of rain falls in Maryland and a 1 in a 1,000 year flood happens in Ellicott City—for the second time in as many years—destroying homes and businesses. A volcano erupts on Hawaii’s Big Island sending lava into neighborhoods and destroying people’s lives. Senseless shootings happen in our cities, towns, and schools. People overdose on opioids and lives and families are destroyed. Homes destroyed by fire. Young people so depressed that they see no reason for living any longer. And the list can go on and on.

It is easy for us to become desensitized to the tragedy around us by saying, “it’s not my home, or my town, or my neighborhood, or my school, or my kids.” Perry County is a close-knit group of people. There aren’t that many of us for a county as big as we are. The whole population of the county is about the same as the city of Harrisburg and because of that, we have a tendency to look out for each other. I was reminded of that this last winter when one of our local pastors slid off the road in one of our snowstorms on a Sunday morning. In the hour that he waited for a tow truck to arrive, no less than 20 people stopped and offered to help. Those are the people that Fred Rogers calls his heroes. They see the need and respond.

We see people everyday whose lives have been disrupted, and in some cases destroyed, by circumstances frequently beyond their control. People who have lost their jobs, had their homes destroyed, their families broken apart, or are now dealing with a life-threatening disease or a disabling condition that limits their ability to get around or to do simple chores that they used to do with ease. These are people with heartbreaking stories who find their way in to us for food and a listening ear. You should know, that for most people, the hardest thing they have to do is cross over the threshold of our door. Some people sit in their cars for an hour or more and leave and come back several times before they can do it. These are people like us who have taken pride in taking care of themselves and taking care of the needy and now find themselves in need of the very help that they once provided to others. It is a very humbling position to be in and we try to be sensitive to it and empathize as best we can.

In the month of April, our numbers were 1,170 households with 33 considered new and 2,760 individuals with 77 being new and in May we served 1,160 households with 20 of them being new and 2,734 individuals and 48 were new.

Our heroes, as Fred Rogers noted, are all of you as you see, and are sensitive to, what those of us at the food bank see each day and you want to help in any way that you can. Thank you for being heroes to so many.

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