

*June, 2019*

*“Every new beginning comes from some other beginning’s end.” —Seneca*

Back in 2013, the two of us were called on to manage the Perry County Food Bank. John began in January and Linda started in June. It was a new beginning for both of us as we transitioned from volunteers in the store working closely with clients to moving over and managing the everyday operation of the facility. We knew from the start that the possibility existed that Linda could be called away at any time to spend more time with her family — both the previous generation and next generation and grandchildren. It’s now six years later and much closer to those possibilities. Rather than wait until it became necessary to leave on short notice, Linda decided back in February to leave the Food Bank at the end of June to spend that time with family — and especially the grandchildren!

By making the decision in February it gave us time to work on finding and training a replacement. We already had a list of qualities that had been handed down and used for us when we were hired and so we began to work toward a “new beginning.” For a number of reasons which presented themselves over the last six years, we decided to move from co-directors to an executive director and an assistant director. This was in line with other existing food banks and we believe that Harry Truman was right when he said that the buck (ultimately) stops on only one desk.

After several months of searching, we were drawn to one relatively new volunteer who showed an interest in becoming more involved with the food bank and was training to work the intake desk with our clients. We were both impressed with her work and called her in and began to speak with her. We wanted to know why God dropped her on our doorstep because we know that when He has done that in the past with others there has always been a reason. After speaking with her several times and hearing her story and looking at the list of the criteria for the job we were both convinced that this was the person that was put here to take the assistant director position.

We met with our board of directors in May and presented Mary Ann Brownawell to them for their consideration of her for the assistant director’s position. After hearing her story, they were all convinced that this is the person to replace Linda (although that is not totally possible!). The board voted unanimously to hire Mary Ann as of July 1 right after Linda leaves on June 28. Their decision validated the decision that the two of us had made. She has been in training with Linda for a month, learning all of the procedures necessary for our everyday operations.

Unfortunately, new beginnings mean that old beginnings have to come to an end, and so it is now. We want to wish Linda Bates well as she starts a new chapter in her life where she can grow closer to her family. We will all miss her, but especially I, John, will miss her. We have become very close over the last six years, partly because we are jammed into one small office but mostly because we have learned from the beginning how much alike we both are. We freakishly utter the same phrases and words at exactly the same time and think alike on ALMOST everything. We are losing a very valuable asset and, by God’s grace, gaining another in return. Hallelujah!

In April, our numbers were 1,086 households with 40 considered new and 2,510 individuals with 95 being new. In May we served 1,055 households with 27 of them being new and 2,503 individuals with 69 being new.



Linda Bates & John Kiner & Mary Ann Brownawell