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October, 2019

“October is a hallelujah! reverberating in my body year-round...” — John Nichols

One of the privileges and joys of living in Pennsylvania, and Perry County in particular, is that we get to experience the glory that is October each year. As I looked out at the one corner of our property during the last week I saw the start of the spectacle that is to come as a maple tree went from green to a spectacular, fiery orange in a matter of days that announced what we have to look forward to in the coming weeks.

God spares no colors on His pallet as he paints the landscape around us into riotous, spectacular, breath-taking, beauty for our pleasure. It is a stunning transition for us as we move from the fertile, life-giving greens of summer toward the cold bleakness that will surround us in winter in just a few short months. October is also the harvest month when the farm crops are gathered in. There is a beauty in the standing fields of corn ready for picking and the bright splashes of orange and yellows of pumpkins and squash on the ground waiting to be carved for Halloween or prepared for the oven to be made into pies. I’m dating myself here, but it used to be we got pumpkin pie. Period. Nowadays we have pumpkin everything from coffee to cosmetics!

In the midst of the beauty that is October, there is also a warning for those who are homeless, unemployed, or living on low wages and minimal fixed incomes. The air begins to get a chill in it and as the first frosts greet us in the morning toward the end of the month, we know that difficult days can lie ahead of us as we head into the heating season. After the heat of summer, the questions now arise about being able to stay warm. Will we be able to find enough wood for the wood stove or be able to afford to buy coal, heating oil, kerosene, propane, or electric to provide enough heat to stay warm and make it through the winter?

In many cases, the only budget that has any flexibility is the food budget. As we move into the heating season people need more help with food because the food money is now buying heat to keep the family warm. The Central PA Food Bank calls it the “Heat or Eat” dilemma. Many of us have been blessed richly enough that we don’t face some of the critical choices that many of our clients have to make. The choices become even more difficult when there are children involved. What parent wants to have to try and explain to a child why there is no food for them in the house because the money for the food is being used to heat the home?

We appreciate so much the help that we receive from all of you – individuals, organizations, businesses, and churches. It is truly inspiring and humbling to see how all of our needs are met each month and through that we are able to offer plenty of food to our customers when they come it to shop

In August, our numbers were 1,044 households with 163 considered new and 2,576 individuals with 474 being new. In September we served 1,093 households with 107 of them being new and 2,710 individuals with 296 being new.

Again, thank you and enjoy October!

John Kiner & Mary Ann Brownawell, Directors