



## Perry County Food Bank

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*“Our humanity comes to its fullest bloom in giving. We become beautiful people when we give whatever we can give: a smile, a handshake, a kiss, an embrace, a word of love, a present, a part of our life...all of our life.”*  
— Henri J.M. Nouwen

October is our transition month. We transition from summer to fall in the month of October with the change in weather and the change in the world around us from the greens of summer to the riotous color that is fall in Pennsylvania. At the Food Bank we transition over to the upcoming holidays during the month of October. We begin providing Thanksgiving dinner ingredients to our clients at the start of November when they come in for their monthly shopping trip. Because of this need to have our Thanksgiving dinner items ready to go for the first shopping day of November, we start stockpiling our items throughout October.

If you are interested in helping to provide items, our current list is for cake mixes and icing, canned corn, canned green beans, stuffing mix, canned turkey gravy or gravy mix and, of course, turkeys. We always suggest that you try to wait for the items that you are going to get for the Food Bank to go on sale. We have enough turkeys to get us well into November so turkeys can wait for the free or low cost turkeys that become available as we get close to Thanksgiving. We should have a turkey for everyone who wants one this year. Along with that is a bag that contains the rest of the items for the meal including mashed potatoes and cranberry sauce.

October is also the month that the two of us take time to recognize all of the hours and hours and hours of time that our volunteers have given to feeding the hungry over the last 12 months. We have a volunteer base of better than 80 regulars who give of their time during each month. We have eight food pantries in various locations throughout the county. Each of those sites is managed by a volunteer coordinator who recruits others to package and distribute food to nearly 400 families each month. In addition to those sites, our facility in New Bloomfield is open every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for clients to shop and requires volunteers to receive food deliveries, stock shelves, check clients in and record their visit, assist them in shopping, bag their groceries and help them take their bags to their vehicles. New Bloomfield serves around 800 families each month.

We literally would not be able to operate the Food Bank without the dedication of our volunteers. So we celebrate Thanksgiving early for our family of volunteers in October. It is our rather inadequate way of saying thank you for all that they do to keep things running smoothly and making our lives less hectic. Although the two of us handle the paperwork, inspections, finances, ordering the food for the eight pantries and New Bloomfield, arranging for the logistics of deliveries, and handling the problems that come up, it is our volunteers who make everything work. So October is Thanksgiving for us as we give thanks to them. The quote above is appropriate as we see some of our volunteers sharing, *“a smile, a handshake, a kiss, an embrace, a word of love, a present, a part of [their] life,”* with our clients which encourages them in the situations that they find themselves in. So thanks be to God for His indescribable gift — of volunteers!

In the month of August, our numbers were 1,088 households with 189 considered new and 2,565 individuals with 487 being new. In September we served 1,037 households with 92 of them being new and 2,437 individuals with 258 being new.

Enjoy October and the change from the heat and humidity of summer to the cooler weather and the beauty that we see surrounding us throughout Perry County!

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