

Woodstock Pantry ENews Brief

16 April 2023

This week we served 263 people. Weekly numbers continue to fluctuate and my data-brain is flummoxed as I try to figure out the factors related to those fluctuations!

What I can say with certainty is that we have not yet leveled off at a new 'normal' since the SNAP cuts. Also, even with the fluctuations, our average is higher than before the SNAP cuts.

SHIFTS & VOLUNTEERS

We had super full shifts this weekend! It was so wonderful!!!! Thanks so very much!!! And we welcomed John and Matt as new volunteers! Thanks so much and we look forward to working with you again!

Chris is in training to cover for me when I'm gone and now Bob has agreed to join her! Though their primary focus will be the pantry, there are also duties related to our other outreach programs. This is huge and such a gift for them to share with us all! Going forward, I'll try to keep them out of specific Distribution roles so that we can train on all the other stuff.

THE SWEEP

You may have noticed this weekend that the streets around the church campus are virtually empty. That is because some in our neighborhood (I don't know who) orchestrated a 'sweep' with the city of Portland.

Several weeks past, green signs showed up on the trees next to campus. It notified our unhoused neighbors how much time they had to leave before the 'sweep'. Each following week, there were fewer and fewer of our neighbors on 40th and 41st.

While some would applaud this change of circumstances in our area and it does in some ways make our work easier, it raises for me questions, lots of questions. And it leaves a hole in my heart.

As I was sweeping up garbage in the parking lot yesterday, it occurred to me that we sweep up garbage. Later, in the sanctuary a volunteer swept the dirt and other things we didn't want from the floor. The irony of this has not escaped me...does that mean the people who were 'swept' from our streets are garbage...dirt...unwanted?

'Where did they go?' is a question that plagued me this last week. Because, they had to go somewhere. They have to sleep somewhere. They have to put their belongings somewhere.... And, as I walked around the neighborhood, I have been finding them.

Our Distribution Teams strive to meet the people to whom we provide food. We introduce ourselves, learn peoples' names, get to know them. Neil, Mike, Ghenna, Andrew, Lauren. These are some of our neighbors. Our Distribution Teams could name more. People, with lives and stories and heartaches and joys and hopes and fears...and without the basic resources to live.

A young woman, Danielle, came yesterday and I asked where she had gone. She told me that she and her boyfriend had moved into a nearby alley but then left. Why? Because the housed neighbor screamed at them to leave and threatened their lives.

I don't have magic answers. I'm not convinced there are magic answers. The challenges we are facing are highly complex, interrelated and confounding. What occurs to me, however, is that we are all community. We are all in this together with Neil and Mike and Ghenna and Danielle... And none of us is garbage.

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PLANNING FOR SUMMER

I'm planning now for summer at the pantry. We have learned how many people we need to be able to serve our neighbors without burning out our volunteers. We need 5 for Receiving; 10 for Packing; and 8 for Distribution (Friday and Saturday).

I would like to find out what you believe your availability will be this summer. With this information, I can make plans to ensure we are not short-handed and we all have a great time while we do this vital work.

If you haven't already, please respond to me personally with answers to questions on the email. Thank you!

APRIL SIGN UP

Please sign up for April's shifts on the new sign up form.

I'm taking vacation the last week of April. Chris will step in to cover my duties while I am gone – thank you Chris! Let's fill up the shifts for the last weekend and help Chris out!

[Woodstock Pantry April Sign Up](#)

Celebrate...

It Takes a Community, And We Are It!