

Woodstock Pantry ENews Brief

12 February 2023

Hey everyone,

I'm back after a brief cold-induced hiatus! This weekend, we served 222 people through the pantry. OFB sent us informational brochures to share with folx, informing them that their SNAP benefits would be cut in half next month. We did share. It's important that we all have the information necessary to navigate our lives.

We are bracing for whatever might come as a result of this next insult on people's ability to thrive, and even survive, in our community. We are making more bags, preparing more food in Hot Meals, gathering more donations, seeking funding to finalize our pantry, engaging more collaborations...

But, as crucial as our efforts are to feed people, the pantry and hot meals are, in-the-end, band aides. Like all good band aides, they stave off the hemorrhaging. And we will continue to do our work until the last person is not hungry. But a band aide is not a solve. We need to effect systemic change to address wicked problems like food and housing insecurity.

So, today I want to look back in our history to feature a group that created profound social systemic change – to honor them, and to find inspiration in the impossible endeavor they had the courage to take on. Then, I want to share a letter from a group of folks in Portland who are fighting for all Portlanders to be able to thrive. I'm going to join them because I believe they stand for systemic and positive change...for everyone.

If you want to go, click on the link to the RSVP. If you want to go together, let me know.

THE BLACK HISTORY OF FOOD JUSTICE

Some might not know that the Black Panthers' Free Breakfast for School Children program, which began in 1969, is considered one of the inspirations of food banking and school meals as we know them today. One of many social programs — including free medical and legal clinics — started by the Black Panthers, free breakfasts in the schools fed thousands of children per day.

Black Panther members and volunteers solicited donations from grocery stores, consulted with nutritionists on healthy breakfast options for kids, and prepared and served food to bring to kids before school. Though the program was shut down following targeted attacks and disinformation campaigns, it put pressure on political leaders to feed children at school and acknowledge food as a human right. This led to the establishment of the USDA free breakfast program, which feeds more than 14 million children today. ([History](#))

WHO GETS TO THRIVE IN OREGON?

[Tri-county Mass Assembly](#)

Who Gets to Thrive in Oregon? Organizing toward a Horizon of Housing & Wholeness

Sunday, February 26, 2023 4-6pm

First Unitarian Church

1211 SW Main St

Portland, Or 97205

RSVP: Email Rev. Julia Nielsen at the link with the # of people you're coming with and subject line 'Mass Assembly'.

The following letter was written by Rev. Nielsen.

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A couple of years ago, two political consultants launched “People for Portland,” an effort to essentially try and make Portland ‘great again’ by further criminalizing houselessness and **shifting money from real supportive health and human services toward hiring more law enforcement**. We've experienced the devastating results of similar moves across Washington, Clackamas, and Multnomah counties over the last few years to make Oregon a home that's safe only for some of us.

But we refuse to accept this future.

So we organize with real people power... People of faith and courage like you collectively saying

YES to housing!

YES to supportive services including mental health!

YES to neighbors caring for neighbors!

And saying a strong **NO** to this grim vision for our cities, region, and state, in which only some of us get to survive and thrive.

On Sunday, February 26th, we will come together for a tri-county Mass Assembly of over 400 people — to show our people power and **invite our elected officials to join us in more creative, community-centered policy and action** so that all Oregonians can find wholeness and belonging in our communities. Less alone, we're more courageous to take action. Together, we are powerful.

Join us and bring your families and neighbors, so that we can change the answer to ‘Who gets to thrive in Oregon?’ from ‘Just a few’ to ‘Everyone, without exception!’

In solidarity,

Jules, Jake, Alyssa, Sarah, and Anna

UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The more we learn about wicked problems, the more capacity we have to address them. Here are more learning opportunities to expand our collective consciousness and ability to effect positive change.

[Oregon Food Bank](#)

FEBRUARY SIGN UP

Thanks for the great response, everyone! It's been wonderful to see so many new and seasoned faces...working together! Please keep coming!

[Woodstock Pantry February Sign Up](#)

NEW STUDENT INTERN

Please join me in welcoming Isabella Abdo, our new Student Intern from Reed College! You may have already met her! She brings a bright smile, a strong back, a curiosity to learn and a dive-in-and-let's-do it attitude! She has already made a great contribution to our work and I anticipate much more to come! Hey Isabella!

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HOT MEALS INDOOR DINING RELAUNCH

We hosted indoor dining for the second time this weekend. Our Saturday distribution volunteers negotiated a winding path to the fridge in our effort to contribute to a wonderful dining experience for our neighbors. Thanks for the extra effort...and navigational skills!

NEWS FROM THE SHIFTS

Receiving – This weekend, we moved 2,814 lbs. of food. Receiving is great for those who like to lift and carry food and get a workout!

Packing – We had a full team this weekend. This team is perfect for folks who don't do heavy lifting and who like a bit slower pace. The shift usually is full.

Distribution – Our distribution teams synced up and served everyone with a smile! Distribution is fast-paced and requires that team members work tightly in sync with each other. It is also the shift wherein we have the closest contact with our neighbors, so customer service is the name of the game! We always need volunteers for these shifts.

Remember...

It Takes a Community, And We Are It!