

Woodstock Pantry ENews Brief

12 March 2023

This week, we served 277 people. We ran out of produce bags at 1pm on Saturday. I made 10 extra dry goods bags and we still didn't have enough. And almost all the bags that don't require cooking were served.

SNAP reductions have hit.

Next week, we'll make 220 bags. I'm hoping we can keep up.

HIGH COST OF LIVING IN PORTLAND

Recently, I shared data about who we are serving at the pantry. I believe it's important to inform our opinions about our neighbors who are unhoused and/or experiencing food insecurity. So, here's an excerpt from an article in [PDX/Parent](#).

'The [Living Wage Calculator](#) from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology concludes that a household with two working adults and two children needs \$110,329 to live comfortably in Portland, Oregon. That's nearly 400% the federal poverty level, otherwise known as high-income. It is also well above the \$90,000 median household income reported for Portland by the city government for 2022.'

'In case your statistics are rusty, that means half the households in Portland earn above \$90,000, and half are below. In other words, more than half the households in Portland do not make enough money to live here.'

Gehring, Stephanie (March 1, 2023) [The Struggle is Real: How Higher Costs are Affecting Portland Families in Portland](#), PDX/Parent.

For many of us, this isn't surprising as we are among the half of Portlanders who can't afford to live here. It also means that some of our volunteers are experiencing housing and food insecurity.

Being volunteers does **not** exclude us from getting food at the pantry. If you need food, you are welcome to get groceries from the pantry! We are *Neighbors Helping Neighbors*. That includes helping our volunteers.

NEW OUTREACH CENTER

We are almost finished remodeling the new Outreach Center, i.e., the room with a freezer next to the bathroom. This room is being dedicated to community outreach. We have hygiene products, clothes, blankets and food. Anyone at the church can share these items with our neighbors. Here's how it works.

If you see someone with a need, get their order, fill a bag with products and get a pre-made bag of groceries. Then, share the bags with the person. These resources are available throughout the week, so people don't have to wait for the pantry to be open to get support. At your next shift, ask for a tour!

WP VOLUNTEER SURVEY

We've been working to develop and improve pantry operations these last months. It's time now to do a check-in with you all. Your input is critically important in creating a pantry that provides top quality service for our neighbors AND a top quality experience for our volunteers. There are three questions:

1. What works well at the pantry?
2. What improvements might you recommend?
3. What supports would improve your experience?

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You can access the survey at [WP Volunteer Survey](#). It should only take five minutes.

Thank you so very much, for all the time you contribute to feeding our neighbors and for the ideas you share today and in the future!

NEWS FROM THE SHIFTS

All shifts went well this weekend. Our teams are strong and know how to do their work. A couple of our regulars, Craig and Jen, on the Packing Team had to step back. We thank you for everything you have contributed to the pantry and we miss you!

This means that the Packing Team, which is usually full, is now short volunteers. The Packing Team is great for those who have physical challenges and/or prefer a less physically strenuous shift. Please consider joining this team!

Welcome Lisa, Maegan, Kim, Joanie and Lilah, new volunteers who joined our distribution teams. We so appreciated your help and look forward to working with you again!

GOOD NEWS

We do not have a food budget for the pantry. So, all the food we serve comes from sources that give it to us for free. You may have noticed a dearth of certain foods these last months. When our sources don't have it, we cannot pay to purchase it.

The good news is that we learned this week that we were awarded an OFB grant to purchase some food! So, Jim and I will be stocking up on items that we can't get from the free sources.

We also learned that OFB has integrated us into the Fresh Alliance Program. OFB will find a grocer to partner with us. Then, we will get free food from our new partner. I'll let you know when we are assigned a partner!

SPRING BREAKS

Our volunteers who have youth in K-12 and who are in college are starting spring break. That includes our fabulous Reed Intern, Isabella, who flew home to visit her family today.

I anticipate that all these folks may not be available to volunteer over the remaining weeks in March. So, I'm hopeful that those of you who are available can jump in to help us out. Please sign up!

MARCH SIGN UP

The remaining weeks in March are Spring Break for our youth. Please sign up for shifts to help us get through the month. **We need help next week!**

[Woodstock Pantry March Sign Up](#)

Remember...

It Takes a Community, And We Are It!