



## Saint Francis of Assisi Food Pantry Newsletter February, 2021

*"We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers"*

### Sharing Hope *Apart* Fall Fundraiser a Success!

We are thrilled to report that MANY of you, our kind and generous supporters, contributed to our **Sharing Hope *Apart*** fall fundraiser. In fact, our donations for this appeal were almost equal to the donations we normally receive from our usual in-person event. We were humbled, amazed, grateful and profoundly blessed by all of you! ❤️

With the pantry remaining open last year we were able to serve 3,272 households with 8,027 household members a total of 9,451 times. Although these numbers represent a modest decrease in the usual number of clients we served prior to the pandemic, we fully expect our numbers will return to pre-pandemic levels as more clients are vaccinated and regain confidence in coming back to the pantry.

We truly appreciate your steadfast support and thank you for all you do for the pantry. Beyond financial support, our clients have benefited from other types of donations as well, highlighted in this newsletter. We certainly couldn't do what we do without *you*! Together we are unstoppable.



We look forward to seeing you in person at our **Sharing Hope** gathering at the Atlantis this November, assuming it is safe to do so. We are keeping a close eye on the status of COVID-19 in our area, as well as state guidelines, and will keep you informed about our event as the date draws closer. In the meantime, stay safe, be well and thank you again for taking such good care of those in need in our community. The hope you provide is priceless!

**SHARING**  **HOPE**

### We Salute *Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers*!

The Reno *Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers* restaurant surprised pantry volunteers by delivering bags of their yummy chicken fingers and tasty accompaniments to the pantry. They wanted to thank the pantry's selfless volunteers for keeping the pantry open and working hard during the pandemic to serve our community.

Raising Cane's has taken a very proactive stance to community service during the pandemic, donating thousands of chicken fingers and almost a half million dollars to healthcare organizations across the country. We are impressed with their bighearted actions and their tasty food!



From L: Volunteers Susan Britt, Karrie & Wayne Backlund, Myra Parks and Kerry McKinney with Pantry President Cindy Becher



Our invaluable and exuberant Missionary volunteers from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



## Soulful Seeds & Costco Donate Instant Pots

Earstin Whitten, President and co-founder of local non-profit organization Soulful Seeds, made arrangements with Costco Wholesale to donate 52 Instant Pot cookers to the pantry for distribution to our clients. Mr. Whitten is a friend of the pantry and donates fresh organic produce to our pantry and others during the summer and fall. He founded Soulful Seeds 2 years ago to teach local young people gardening skills while growing produce that is donated those in need.

Mr. Whitten grew up poor in rural Arkansas, one of 14 children in a sharecropper family who relied on the produce they grew to feed themselves. He is now a retired insurance executive who believes in self-reliance and giving a people a hand up, not a hand-out.

Soulful Seeds currently operates the St. Mary's Community Garden and is developing partnerships with other local organizations including creating a community garden in the new Washoe County "Our Place" campus for homeless or displaced women and families, and working with the Great Basin Food Co-Op to create a line of specialty garlic spices. A big thank you to Earstin Whitten, Soulful Foods, and our Reno Costco Wholesale for their generosity!



Check out the Soulful Seeds website for more information on this educational and beneficial organization. [Soulful Seeds | Gardening Nonprofit Reno, NV \(www.soulful-seeds.com\)](http://www.soulful-seeds.com)

## Dan and Rube Rule!

Pantry volunteers Dan and Rube Jukich are champion coupon clippers! Rube in particular was able to use coupons to amass such a large amount of shampoo, soap, deodorant, socks and makeup that she, her husband and their children decided to wrap them up into packages for senior pantry clients. In addition to all the toiletries, they also included a Domino's Pizza gift card in each bag. Way to go, Dan, Rube and your terrific hardworking kids! Your family has brought a lot of joy to many surprised and utterly delighted senior clients!



Thank You, Jukich Family!



## Wooden Wonders from Nevada Woodchucks

Nevada Woodchucks is a local non-profit group of men and women who love woodworking and offer classes in it, along with crafting wooden toys and other creations that they donate to organizations in our area including the pantry. This year for Christmas the pantry received dozens of toys for our clients' kids including little trucks, cars, baby cribs, puzzles, buses, horses' heads on sticks and so on. These are all hand-painted toys and were eagerly snapped up by our clients who were thrilled to find special and unique gifts for their kids at the pantry.

This past year the Nevada Woodchucks made over 1,400 toys for local kids and donated them to 13 non-profits in the Reno-Sparks area including St. Francis of Assisi Food Pantry. Because of the pandemic, this year most of the toys were made at club members' homes because of limitations on the number of members who could work together at the club workshop.

We were delighted to receive these very special handmade toys and sincerely thank the dedicated and creative volunteers of Nevada Woodchucks for their fun and thoughtful donation. We fervently hope we land on their Christmas list again this year!



## Warm Blessings from the Women of St. Rose of Lima Church

We were blessed with some warm handknit shawls and scarves from the Women of St. Rose Prayer Shawl Ministry. This is a group of ladies with nimble fingers who belong to St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Reno. They meet weekly to knit and crochet shawls, lap robes for the wheelchair bound, baby blankets for Casa de Vita, hats for the homeless, newborn caps and so on. These gifts are greatly cherished by our clients!





## Big Hugs for the Bargaquasts

The pantry has been blessed with abundant donations from generous pantry supporters Brett and Morgan Bargaquist. They go shopping at Costco Wholesale for the pantry and recently dropped off a wide variety of items including paper goods, toothpaste and toothbrushes, other toiletries, laundry soap, dish soap and body soap along with non-perishable food such as boxes of Macaroni & Cheese, Chili Beans and quinoa and brown rice mixes. They've also promoted the pantry to their friends and neighbors, who have followed through with monetary donations.

We couldn't be more excited and grateful to receive these supplies, which boost the amount of items available for our clients at a time when they are needed most.



*Brett, his Mom and wife Morgan load up pantry supplies at Costco*

In addition, Brett and Morgan purchased a pair of shoes for one of our clients who needed them and wasn't able to buy them for herself. She's got a big happy smile beneath her mask!



We thank Brett and Morgan for their kind hearts and willingness to go the extra mile for those in need. ❤️

## Congrats to the Padgett Family!

Congratulations to longtime pantry volunteer Chris Padgett and his wife Cassandra on the birth of their son Grant. Way to go! We'll look forward to seeing him at the pantry in a few years as our newest little volunteer!



## Yes, We've Got Milk!



According to Feeding America, our nation's largest domestic hunger relief organization, milk is one of the food items most requested by people visiting food pantries. Our pantry usually has plenty of milk and other dairy products on hand for clients, however the typical food pantry is only able to provide the equivalent of approximately one gallon of milk per person per year.

With eight grams of protein per serving, milk is the top food source of three of the key nutrients most likely to be missing in the American diet — calcium, vitamin D and potassium — and one way for America's feeding programs to get nutrients into the hands of people who need it.

While many people make generous donations to pantries of shelf stable foods such as canned goods, milk is a lot harder to donate due to it being perishable. Fortunately, Feeding America and America's dairy community collaborated in The Great American Milk Drive in the fall of 2020 to deliver more than 34 million servings of fresh milk to food banks in the USA, especially needed due to the pandemic.

Feeding America is the primary food source for our partner, the Food Bank of Northern Nevada. We are proud to be working with these two exceptionally effective and committed organizations in the ongoing effort to end hunger in America.



*Milk and other dairy products ready and waiting for our clients*



**We are always looking for volunteers to pick up donations, unload trucks, place items on our shelves and/or assist clients. Contact Cindy Becher at 772-2759 if you would like to help. COVID-19 safety protocol is followed at all times.**

## Support the Pantry While You Shop!

If you are like many who shop online at Amazon, especially during this time of staying safe at home, we encourage you to log into Amazon Smile and choose St. Francis of Assisi Food Pantry as your designated charity. When you shop at Amazon Smile, which is identical to the regular Amazon website, the Amazon Smile Foundation will donate .5% of the dollar value of your eligible purchases to the pantry, at no cost to you.

Here's how to set it up:

1. Using your usual Amazon sign on information, log into <https://smile.amazon.com/>
2. Amazon will prompt you to choose a charity.
3. Search for **Saint Francis of Assisi Food Pantry Reno** and select it. It will remain your selected charity until you change or delete it.
4. Log in and shop at <https://smile.amazon.com/>

That's it! Very easy and you will be helping support the pantry with every purchase you make. On a quarterly basis, the Amazon Smile Foundation combines donations generated from all purchases designated for the pantry during the previous 3 months and automatically sends a donation to us. Just be sure to always log into <https://Smile.Amazon.com> to make the magic happen!



## The Pantry Doors Are Still Open!

We are proud to say that with only one recent exception, the doors of Saint Francis of Assisi Food Pantry have stayed open during this pandemic. We have kept to our same operating schedule since COVID-19 made its initial appearance in our area last March and are grateful for our committed volunteers who have stood strong and unwavering to help others while wearing their masks and keeping their distance.

We know that our clients rely on the pantry to obtain fresh healthy food each week during this tremendously challenging time. The pantry is considered an essential business and as such we are committed to staying open to serve our community. With your support, we will continue to be there for our clients. We look forward to the day when masks are no longer required and COVID has made its exit from the world stage, but until then with your help we will continue fulfilling our mission of being our brothers' and sisters' keepers!



## Together We're Making a Difference

We have received generous grants from the following organizations which allow us to continue providing the less fortunate in our community with healthy food and other items at no cost to them.

- ♥ **Food Bank of Northern Nevada** - their 2020 grant of \$5,000 allowed us to purchase 80 new heavy duty folding shopping carts for our clients to take home with them.
- ♥ **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** – for their gifts in 2020 of food and household goods, and strong support from LDS volunteers, we cannot thank this exceptionally giving and caring church enough for all the outstanding assistance they have provided to us from the beginning. Their help has always been extraordinary!
- ♥ **United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierras** – for generous grants totaling \$22,000 to support food purchases for our clients from January, 2020 – April, 2021.



United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra

