

Saint Francis of Assisi Food Pantry Newsletter March, 2020

"We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers"

Spaghetti Dinner is now Sharing Hope Dinner!

We are excited to announce that our annual Spaghetti Dinner fundraiser for the Saint Francis of Assisi Food Pantry is being renamed **Sharing Hope** to signify its true purpose – to raise funds so that we can give hope and encouragement to those in our community who need food assistance.

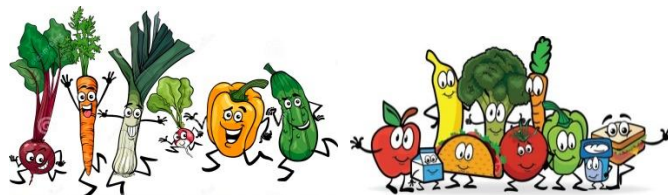
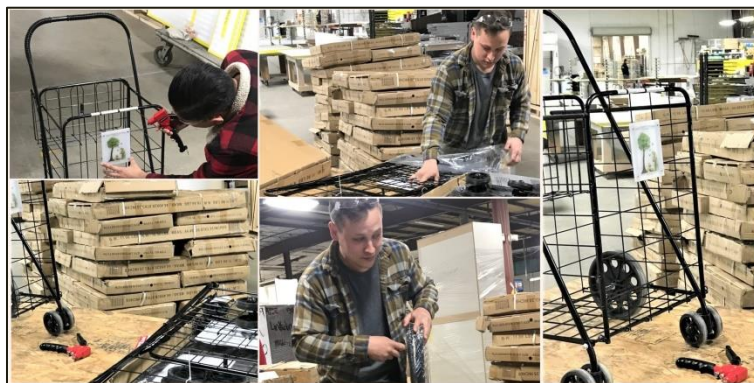
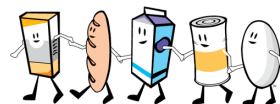
The original Sharing Hope party was created for Sister Carmen Baca, who has run a food pantry sponsored by Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Church in Reno for many decades. Our pantry founder, Cindy Becher, organized this fundraiser for several years. Sister Carmen is retiring in July after more than 40 years of steadfast dedicated service to our community and she has given us her blessing to use the name Sharing Hope for our annual fundraising event.

Mark your calendars now for the 6th Annual Sharing Hope dinner to be held on **Saturday, November 21** at the Atlantis Casino Resort Spa. Stay tuned for more details as the new Committee begins to organize this special event for 2020.

Hope Rolls Home in Shopping Carts

The pantry has recently received two grants, one from Dermody Properties Foundation and one from the Food Bank of Northern Nevada, which allowed us to purchase a supply of sturdy folding shopping carts which we give to our disabled clients who need assistance bringing their food home from the pantry. Clients are thrilled to have an easy way to transport a cart full of fresh, nutritious food to their homes and we are delighted we can make their lives a little easier.

When new carts are received, employees Kye and Jose at Complete Millworks Services, Inc. assemble them and attach our pantry logo to the front of each cart. The carts are then ready to distribute to pantry clients, and soon hope rolls out the pantry door and into our community!



A Salute to the 2019 Spaghetti Dinner Committee!

It's never too late to recognize the hardworking Committee (all volunteers) that organized and ran our 5th annual Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser last October 26.

Chairman **Don Eberlein** and his Committee began their work last March. After an organizational meeting or two, volunteers fanned out across Reno and Sparks soliciting donations for the Silent Auction and Raffle and picking them up as needed. Don coordinated this effort and also worked closely with the ever-gracious and helpful Alberto Castiblanco, Assistant Director of Catering for the Atlantis Casino Resort Spa, to plan the arrangements and timeline for the dinner.

Don and his wife Mary Ann assembled most of the baskets and produced the Thank You notes to our donors. Don kept track of all the donations, prepared the booklet given to guests the night of the dinner, and with the Committee performed countless other tasks to ensure the evening was a spectacular success.

All of the Committee members contributed in large and small ways to the success of the event. Special thanks to:

Barbara Reyes, who produced the slideshow and helped in various other ways as needed.

Cathy Johnson, who designed the table settings and room décor, purchased items to create 48 centerpieces for the tables, made the special sign for the door of the ballroom, and more. She and her talented helpers created another fabulous fall fantasy for our guests to enjoy.

Cheryl McCaffrey, who stored the completed baskets of over 100 donated items in her home until the time came to transport them to the Atlantis. Cheryl also solicited donations, set up the Raffle item displays at the Atlantis, and helped with the table settings.

Cindy Becher, who puts all of the donations to good use buying food to feed our clients and inspiring hope year-round to those in difficult circumstances.

Chuck Rice, who produced the compelling video of our clients speaking candidly about what the pantry means to them. Chuck also took tons of photos the night of the dinner, some of which you saw in the January newsletter.

Cynthia Crone, who holds the pantry record for the most donations solicited and received over the past 5 years, despite moving out of state part-way through last summer.

Deacon Don Korson, who provided steady assistance during the many months preceding the dinner and of course, was our suave, smooth talking Master of Ceremonies for the 2nd consecutive year.

Kerry McKinney, who organized the guest list and seating at the tables, and contributed in many other ways in the months preceding months.

Toni Taft, who provided ongoing assistance during the months preceding the dinner, set up the Silent Auction displays at the Atlantis on the night of the dinner and helped with table settings as well.

Wayne and Karrie Backlund, who carefully transported all of the Silent Auction and Raffle items from Cheryl's house to the Atlantis, with nary a scratch, dent or chip in any of them! They are also faithful hardworking drivers all year long, picking up donations every week all around Reno and Sparks that are essential to the pantry operation.

There were a million other tasks to complete before the dinner took place, and the all-volunteer Committee worked long and hard to create a magical and meaningful evening that would not only be enjoyable but also informative.

A new Committee is now beginning to plan for our 2020 Sharing Hope Dinner. Mark **Saturday, November 21** on your calendars and stay tuned for more details in the coming months.

All of us at the pantry thank *all of you* once again for your loyal support and caring commitment to helping the needy in our community. We couldn't do it without all of you at our side!

2019 SPAGHETTI DINNER COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Don Eberlein, Chairman	Cheryl McCaffrey
Cindy Becher	Kerry McKinney
Cynthia Crone	Mary McKnight
Kay Dolden	Diana Shaw
Mary Ann Eberlein	Toni Taft
Patty Gurries	Kimberly Wheeler

In addition to the above, there were many more who helped on the day of the event to make it a huge success including Steve and Anna Corder, Brett Glover, Greg Schroeder, Bill Stone, Julie Williams and 8 ladies from the Newcomers and Neighbors of Northern Nevada. A heartfelt salute to these caring hardworking volunteers!



Pantry T-Shirts Given New Life

Two talented young ladies who live in Reno, Becca Baker and Bree Kasper, teamed up to create a new non-profit organization called Sew Together Reno. Their mission is to teach others how to sew, brainstorm with others on creative projects and help students to learn more about themselves while acquiring new skills. They offer classes in sewing, mending, and quilting. Their motto is:

SEW ❤️ **LEARN** 🌟 **THRIVE** 🍀

Becca and Bree created cloth shopping bags for the pantry and repurposed some of our old pantry t-shirts as the lining for the bags. They donated a rack of these colorful and useful shopping bags to the pantry, and one of our clients quickly chose one to bring home with her. We thank these creative and generous young ladies for their unique and thoughtful donation to the pantry!



Reno's Housing Woes on BBC Website

One of our volunteers passed along an in-depth report posted by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) on the current economic situation in the US. Surprisingly, it focused on the housing crisis currently happening in Reno.

Reporters from the BBC wrote a lengthy article published on the BBC News website on February 20 this year that included interviews with state officials and a private sector financial analyst in Las Vegas, along with leaders and clients of the Food Bank of Northern Nevada and St. Vincent's Food Pantry in Reno. A few excerpts from the article follow:

"Unemployment is low, but unfortunately unemployment is not a great indicator of how many people are hungry," says Jocelyn Lantrip, from the Food Bank of Northern Nevada, which supplies charities including St. Vincent's Food Pantry. And often, those going hungry - or temporarily homeless - are people who already have jobs.

Elliott Parker, chair of economics at the University of Nevada, Reno, argues that "recovery is in the eye of the beholder". The latest data from the Census Bureau suggests that median household income is still just below 2008 levels, he adds. "We are finally at the end of a very long recovery - but wages have risen nowhere near as fast as housing and rental prices."

Nevada has the nation's worst shortage of affordable housing for low-income families, according to an advocacy group, only 19 homes for every 100 low-income renter households. There are various reasons for the house prices - including stalled construction from the 2008 financial crisis that has been slow to pick up.

And Reno residents complain about the "Tesla effect" - as tech workers and retirees from the more expensive neighbouring state of California cross the border into Nevada, they push up rental prices for locals.

"Fifty percent of people in Nevada rent, and half of them are rent burdened - meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on housing," says state Senator Julia Ratti, whose district covers the Reno-Sparks area.



To read the entire article, please click on, or go to, this link:
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-51578045>

New Coronavirus Procedures at the Pantry

Our innovative pantry President Cindy Becher has instituted new procedures at the pantry to safely distribute food to our clients in this difficult time when we are all being urged to avoid crowds to reduce the impact of the coronavirus in our area.

Cindy has created a new paper *Pantry Grocery List* that will be given to clients who arrive at the pantry. They will mark the food items they are seeking; volunteers inside the pantry will do their shopping for them while they wait in their car or wait outside if they have arrived on food, by bus or bicycle. Volunteers will select their items from our shelves and bag everything, then staple their list to their bags and hand the bags to our clients.

Says Cindy, "I'm not planning on closing the pantry any time soon and I really think we can help our clients with obtaining the right foods that they need to help their families and still be giving them choices. Let's all work together and help our 'Brothers and Sisters' in our Community!!"

Our courageous and dedicated volunteers are making this new method work for as long as we are under the coronavirus threat. On March 17, Nevada Governor Sisolak ordered "non-essential" businesses in the state to close, but he exempted essential businesses including "food, shelter or social services for disadvantaged populations."



Happy 4th Birthday to Us!

We are happy to celebrate birthday number 4 of the Saint Francis of Assisi Food Pantry in April!

The pantry first opened its doors on April 4, 2016 and served 205 families in that first month. Today the pantry serves approximately 1,000 families per month! From March 1, 2019 through February 29, 2020, our clients made nearly 12,000 visits to the pantry for food assistance, and the numbers continue to rise.

We couldn't do this work without ongoing assistance from those of you in our community who provide financial support and those who offer hands-on effort to help the neediest among us. We are always looking for caring, committed and reliable volunteers, so please contact Cindy Becher at 772-2759 or cdbecher@aol.com if you would like to join the pantry family and make a tremendous life-changing difference in the lives of our clients.

We're turning 4 on 4-4!



Green Solutions Recycling Says Good Bye

We were sorry to learn that Green Solutions Recycling can no longer offer us free pick-up of our discarded cardboard because they are withdrawing from the Northern Nevada market. They set up their recycling dumpster in our back parking lot in January, 2018 and we have been extremely grateful to them for emptying the dumpster weekly. The pantry generates a LOT of cardboard from all the boxes we receive containing produce, eggs, and other food.

We have now signed an agreement with Waste Management to pick up our recycling, but at a significant monthly cost to the pantry. We thank Green Solutions Recycle for their generosity and community spirit the past 2 years. They are champs & we hope to see them back someday!



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.

- ♥ **Dermody Properties Foundation** – their recent grant of \$1,500 allowed us to purchase sturdy new folding shopping carts for our clients.
- ♥ **Food Bank of Northern Nevada** - their recent grant of \$2,500 allowed us to purchase sturdy new folding shopping carts for our clients.
- ♥ **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**, for their generous gift of \$12,500 throughout 2019 for food, cleaning and paper products from the Bishop's Storehouse, \$10,000 in used furniture and clothing from Deseret Industries Thrift Store in Sacramento, plus a grant of \$12,000 for a new freezer and new glass double doors for Suite E. We are elated and our clients love the hearty nutritious food. We cannot thank this exceptionally giving and caring church enough for all the outstanding support they have provided to us.



**BD WOLFE
INVESTMENTS, LLC
Douglas and Brenda
Wolfe**

