



Saint Francis of Assisi Food Pantry Newsletter November, 2021

"We are our brothers' and sisters' keepers"

Serving Hope Spaghetti Dinner

As announced in our July newsletter, we are once again unable to hold our annual fundraiser this year due to the ongoing impact of COVID restrictions on our venue, the Atlantis Casino Resort Spa.

Therefore, we are planning our next **Serving Hope Spaghetti Dinner** for the **Fall of 2022** when we optimistically anticipate the risk of COVID-19 transmission will be dramatically reduced and mandatory limitations and masking requirements for large gatherings will be relaxed or eliminated.



Until then, we will continue to serve our clients and humbly ask for your continuing support while we eagerly await a return to normal next year.

There are several ways to help the pantry through this challenging time. Three immediate needs for the upcoming holidays are mentioned in this newsletter and of course we are always grateful for your financial support as well. We are in this together through good times and bad to ensure no one goes hungry in our community. May you have joyful and blessed holidays and an uplifting start to 2022!



Thanksgiving at the Pantry

As we have done in past years, we will be offering our clients a choice of a turkey or whole chicken for their Thanksgiving dinner this year. If you would like to donate frozen turkeys or chicken, we would be ever so grateful!

Gift cards for groceries would also be much appreciated, specifically \$25 or higher gift cards from Safeway, Save Mart, Smiths, Walmart or WinCo. Be sure to obtain the type of cards that can be used for the purchase of food only.

You can drop off donations during pantry hours from now until Thursday, Nov. 18. They will be given to clients the following week.



Christmas Toys Needed

To make the holidays brighter for the children of our clients, we would like to have a bountiful supply of smaller new unopened toys on hand for their parents to choose from before Christmas. If you can help make a child's Christmas brighter, drop off donations during pantry hours from Thursday, Dec. 2 through Monday, Dec. 20. Thanks in advance to all you jolly secret Santas!



Volunteers Offered by the Amazon Community Together Program

We were very excited to be contacted by a representative of the new **Amazon Community Together** (ACT) program, which offers employee volunteers to local non-profit organizations. These volunteers are paid Amazon employees who are on light duty and unable to work their normal job at Amazon due to their temporary physical restrictions.

As stated in an email to us from Ariana Linn, Amazon Community Together Specialist, *"We know that quite often our employees can be very helpful in our community when the physical nature of the work at our sites is temporarily too difficult due to these restrictions. We are hoping to include you in our program to help staff you with volunteers that can work a minimum of 20 hours/week."*

Of course, we immediately said YES and will be working with Ms. Linn to coordinate scheduling these new temporary volunteers.

During the pandemic, one of our biggest challenges has been finding volunteers to pick up food donations, stock our shelves, and assist clients during pantry hours. Volunteering is fun and easy, and it's gratifying knowing you are making a difference in someone's life. We work as a team and greet our clients with a smile, as shown by our volunteers below. If you can help, contact Cindy Becher at 775.772.2759.



Hardworking Elder and Sister volunteers from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints



Prescription Pantry Program Produces Significant Results

We recently received feedback from our partner, the Food Bank of Northern Nevada, on the results of the Prescription Pantry program. St Francis of Assisi Food Pantry is one of only 7 food pantries in our area that were asked to participate in this program which began in the Spring of 2018. One of the pantries, FISH, is located in Carson City while the other 6 are in Reno and Sparks.

From July – September 2021, this innovative program assisted 10,098 clients who were referred to the pantries by their medical providers to obtain fresh, healthy food to improve their health status. Over the 3-month period, an impressive 507,876 pounds of food was distributed to these clients, which equates to 423,230 meals (using an average of 1.2 pounds of food per meal.) Way to go!

In addition, FBNN volunteers in pantries including St. Francis of Assisi submitted 486 applications for SNAP benefits (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as Food Stamps), affecting 768 household members. Nevada has a relatively low rate of participation in this program and has been identified as one of the 10 worst states for seniors who lack the funds to purchase sufficient food for themselves. With the ongoing steep increase in rental costs in our area and the steadily increasing cost of food and gasoline, seniors and others on fixed incomes are struggling to get by.

Toiletry Items Needed for Seniors

We would like to provide our senior clients with a special holiday toiletry gift bag. Can you help? Small size items are needed and can include the items listed below and more. You can drop off donations during pantry hours from Thursday, Dec. 2 through Monday, Dec. 20.

Bar or liquid soap
Deodorant
Hand and body lotion
Nail care items
Razors & shaving cream
Shampoo & conditioner
Shower gel
Toothbrushes & toothpaste
Mouthwash

Thank You, Reno Grocery Outlet!

We were delighted to receive \$475 in gift cards from the Reno Grocery Outlet at 3800 S. Kietzke Lane, thanks to the *Independence from Hunger Food Drive* held last July. Cindy promptly spent the gift cards at the Grocery Outlet, buying food for the pantry to prepare for our busiest time of year.



Cindy with Reno Grocery Outlet owners Tammy and Brian Vieira

The Grocery Outlet has been a steady and generous supporter of the pantry and we couldn't be more grateful to have them as one of our loyal local partners.



Generous Gift from Local Supporters

We were thrilled to receive a wonderful surprise from two of our local supporters. Their very generous gift of \$10,000 will go far in stocking our shelves through the coming winter months. The need in our area has never been greater and their openhearted generosity will make a big difference in the lives of many in our community.



Thank You, Costco Wholesale!

A grateful **THANK YOU** to Costco Wholesale at 2200 Harvard Way in Reno for their generous donations to the pantry of fresh fruits, vegetables and other non-perishable items. We pick up from Costco every week and are always amazed at the generous quantity and variety of food they give to the pantry. They are yet another of our awesome local community partners who help us stock our shelves with fresh, wholesome food for our clients.



Congratulations to Fr. John Bain on the 50th Anniversary of his Ordination

Congratulations to Father John Bain of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Reno on the 50th Anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. His anniversary was in April, 2020 but his celebration was delayed until October 16, 2021 due to the pandemic. Father Bain was a regular volunteer at the pantry until the pandemic began last year. We thank Fr. Bain for his many years of service to the church and his community.



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!



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 most recent gift of \$5,000 worth of food from the Bishops' Storehouse. 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.

