

Q & A Pantry Info Skit to Church during Service 11-26-2023

From Val Eurman and Cindy Oliver, co-chairs

Q So how long have we been doing our GSLC Food Distribution (now called Pantry Distribution as it has grown to include more than just food)?

We started in 2012 with about 20 families and now we regularly are serving 130-150 families – representing more than 300 family members. During the height of the pandemic we were serving 80-90 families in a drive through, box pick up format.

Q When is our distribution?

A The distribution is the first Saturday morning of every month – rain, shine, mud, OR holiday. That said, we collect / purchase items and prepare for it all month long.

People line up to go through registration well before 8 on the 1st Saturday. We often have 50+ cars in the parking lot by 7:15 when our volunteers start arriving. After clients register they are given a number and are able to go back to the rest of our church campus to our other stations (food, health, clothing) until the actual FOOD distribution starts at 9.

Q What do we provide on the First Saturday?

We distribute food and hygiene supplies, as well as free clothing/ linens/ children's toys to our Goleta community members in need.

Q What else do we do on the First Saturday?

We have prayer warriors available at the distribution so that people can share prayer requests. We also provide a fellowship table with breakfast snacks and coffee, and typically have 2 registered nurses at a health station where our neighbors can get their blood pressure taken, test their blood sugar, or ask general health questions. Sometimes we have another non profit attend (like SBCC and CalFresh – which registers people for the equivalent of Food Stamps)

Q Who can receive the goods at our Pantry Distribution? And HOW MUCH does it cost our clients?

ANYONE can join us and there is no income requirement or imposing questions. And everything we provide TO clients is FREE to THEM.

Q How can we do that?

Only through YOUR generosity and the support of a few non profits.

We are able to **get** produce (fruits and vegetables) **for free** from the Food Bank, lettuce from the Hollandia farm in Carpinteria, and miscellaneous food from the non-profit Santa Ynez Veggie Rescue.

We **purchase** basic dry food/canned items at low cost from the Food Bank but otherwise we need to augment food supplies each month and purchase items—like Almond Milk, and cereal—that often we cannot get through the Food Bank.

We also purchase breakfast items, and hygiene products that typically include a couple rolls of TP, Kleenex, paper towels, and soap **with the money you donate**. We typically have a miscellaneous table where a client can **CHOOSE** an additional hygiene item of choice that we purchase: like toothpaste, deodorant, dish soap, laundry detergent – all of which can get costly.

Q: SO Where do we shop?

Locally at Costco, Smart n Final, Target... and then Walmart (which Cindy often swings through on her way home from Bakersfield!)

Q What's the process on the 1st Saturday mornings?

When people come the first time to our distribution on Saturday morning, we enter basic personal info into the Food Bank's registry, and each person gets a "bar code" – like what you get for a gym membership. Each time they come through thereafter, we simply SCAN the bar code. Our neighbors can go to any of the other Food Distributions in the county also with the same bar code.

Q: SO **What are our needs now to support the Pantry Distribution??**

We spend each month at least \$1000, frequently \$1,500 which breaks down to be \$10-\$15 per family each month. We would really appreciate year-end giving to augment our fund!

We can also use a few more volunteers particularly on the **Friday** before the distribution 10-12 for set up/ sorting / bagging items **and** on **Saturday** morning for set up and the actual distribution. We are very conscientious to be sure volunteers are assigned positions within their own comfort zone and so they are safe.

Q: Is that it?

Well, in closing, let's say that we appreciate your generosity of time (hands and feet!), in-kind donations, and financial support for the Good Shepherd Pantry