



Truck-Full of Hope Food Drive

Volunteer Spotlight

Thank you!





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Dear Friends,

The Holiday season is upon us – and it came rather quickly! The summer flew by and now it is time to hunker down for the winter ahead. I love to curl up on the couch and enjoy a Christmas movie with a cup of hot chocolate, read a good book or crochet a baby afghan. While we think about the cold outside and the warmth of our homes, others are not quite so fortunate. Winter can be a very stressful time for many families/individuals in our communities. The extra dollars that go to heating, electricity and fuel will mostly likely place a heavy burden on budgets that are already stretched to the max. We, as the Community Food Warehouse, with the help of our community, will be able to assist and bring some comfort to those in need.

We have launched our annual direct mail campaign – *Each One Feed One* – which runs through December 31st. This campaign is a prime source of funds for us to continue operations through the fall/winter months. It is our hope that you will prayerfully consider making a donation to help us feed those in our communities who struggle to put food on their tables. If you haven't received a mailing, please visit our website (www.foodwarehouse.org) for a downloadable flyer or for your convenience you can donate online.

This year we have been blessed to expand our Holiday Food Drive from just one night at the Hermitage Holiday Light Up Parade to almost a three week period to drop off food to fill a **"Truck-full of Hope"** food drive hosted by Mel Grata Chevrolet! In fact, you filled THREE trucks full of hope! Thank you to Lynette Hartenstein, the originator of the Holiday Food Drive and to Marti Grata who took the lead and made this a very successful event. Folks were still encouraged to bring nonperishable food to the parade, if they still wanted to. Thank you to everyone who contributed!

Still to come is Sharon Night of Lights (November 25th) where the Greater Sharon Associates sponsor sleigh rides which benefit the CFWMC! Come and set the tone for the Christmas season by enjoying the festivities and a sleigh ride!

This time of year can be extremely busy for everyone and we can lose sight of what really counts – our family, our friends and our neighbors! It is our prayer that you will be able to take full advantage of this season of hope and be blessed by the true meaning of Christmas and the holiday times as we work together to **"Starve Hunger – Feed Hope"**!

Blessings to All - Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Lori Weston
Executive Director



Wednesday, November 1, 2017 was indeed a new and great day for the Community Food Warehouse! The inaugural "Truck-Full of Hope" food drive kicked off with a media event at 1:30 PM at Mel Grata Chevrolet in Hermitage. Mel Grata Chevrolet graciously partnered with us and hosted the 18-day food drive to precede and augment the traditional Hermitage Holiday Light Up Parade. Residents throughout Mercer County were encouraged to bring their non-perishable food donations to the Chevy showroom at Mel Grata Chevrolet and fill-the-truck starting Nov. 1 and culminating at the Hermitage Holiday Light Parade Nov. 18. Residents were also invited to bring bags of food items to the parade route for volunteers to pick up as in years past. On the last day of the Truck-Full of Hope drive Nov. 18, yet another truck was parked at the Shenango Valley Mall to receive donations during the new Hermitage Holiday Light Festival.

Working alongside Marti Grata was a delight. She enthusiastically came on board to help, making sure a brand-new showroom Chevy truck was colorfully decorated for the holidays, ready to be filled with food to aid Mercer County residents in need of food assistance. "We're proud to host the first fill-the-truck event for the Community Food Warehouse of Mercer County," said Marti Grata, of Mel Grata Chevrolet. "We know how important it is to help support our community in need, especially during the holiday season." Special thanks go out to Marti and Mel, Brendon Radcliffe, Dave Sabolsky and the entire Mel Grata team who helped make this an incredible food drive.

This year marked the fourteenth year for the Hermitage Holiday Light-Up Parade food drive. Each year, faithful parade goers have lined the parade route with bags of non-perishable food items for the holiday season. In the last several years, however, donations had dwindled, and we had been looking for ways to revive this holiday tradition. Working with Lynette Hartenstein, original parade food drive organizer, we were able to add another dimension through this partnership with Mel Grata and extend the duration of the food drive to give folks another option and timeframe to donate food.



2017 Hunger Champion

We are so grateful to Lynette (and to her husband, Geoff as well!) for those fourteen years of dedication and hard work in making this holiday food drive a success and for her creative energy this year in making sure it continues for years to come. We honor her with our 2017 Hunger Champion Award!

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: MILITARYSHARE

The Community Food Warehouse of Mercer County's MilitaryShare Program officially passed the one-year mark since our first distribution. MilitaryShare, a program which is available to both active-duty service members and veterans, currently serves 30 families. This most recent distribution saw an almost even split between active-duty service members and their families, and veterans and their families. Within the thirty families, there were 44 adults, 40 children, and 15 senior citizens served.

Families received food such as: fresh apples, cheese, soups, frozen chicken breast, and peanut butter. They also received non-food items, such as shampoo, toothbrushes, and toilet paper. Several volunteer groups have taken on packing the boxes. Typically, around 72 boxes are packed for each distribution- every family receives at least two boxes of food, and larger families receive more. "Our group of Allstate agents in Mercer County have volunteered for different events with the CFW over the years, but when we all heard about the military share program we all wanted to help. To say that we were able to give back to our local military families, who have given so much for us, was really special. This is a program we look forward to contributing to in the future on a regular basis," said Gino Nicastro, board member and volunteer.

Beginning in January 2018, the program will begin distribution every other month, instead of the current quarterly distribution. If you know someone who is interested in signing up for the program, or you have a group who is interested in making a financial contribution or packing boxes for the program, please contact Program/Volunteer Coordinator, Lauren Moyer, at: 724.981.0353 or lmoyer@foodwarehouse.org.

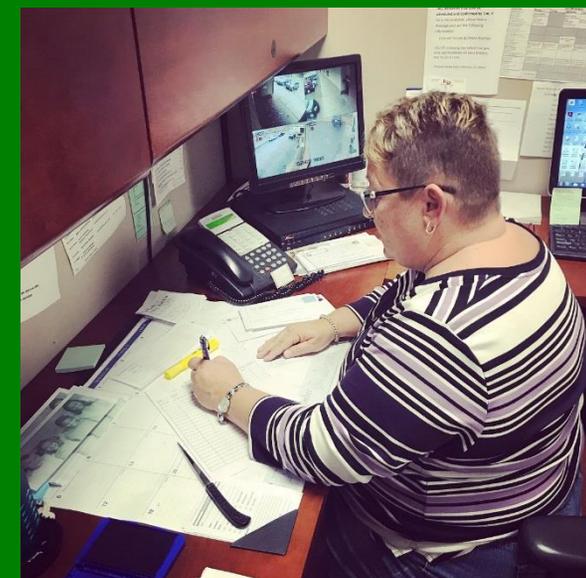
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: RECEPTION VOLUNTEERS

If you've ever called the Community Food Warehouse, you've likely spoken with Marlyn Bell, Sharon Clark-Siefert, and Becky Pappas. Marlyn, Sharon, and Becky answer the phones, assist with data entry, mail, and are often found helping out at our special events as well! Sharon is a pharmacy tech and also cooks meals for one of our agencies, St. John's Kitchen, once a month, including Christmas Day. On all of her volunteer work, Sharon says, "I've always wanted to give back, especially to the hungry, and now I have the time to do it."

On volunteering here at the CFWMC, Marlyn, the former office manager for her husband's dental practice, said: "There is a time in our lives when we are able to give our time and talents to help others. I am truly grateful that I was introduced to the wonderful people and programs at Community Food Warehouse. I have found a place where I truly enjoy my volunteer work."

As most know, we wouldn't be able to accomplish half of what we do, without the invaluable help of our volunteers. So far this year, Marlyn, Sharon, and Becky have logged over 540 hours of volunteer time with us. "I enjoy volunteering at the Warehouse to feel a sense of purpose, giving back to my community, and the people that work there are passionate about what they do which inspires me," said Becky, who was formerly the office manager at Oldforge Tools in New Wilmington.

We would like to express our gratitude to all three of you and let you know how appreciated you are!



Clockwise: Marlyn helping out with the Senior Food Box Program; Becky going through the mail; Sharon getting into the Hunger Action Month spirit.

THANK YOU!

We would like to thank the following people and organizations for your contributions to the Community Food Warehouse this year- it is because of the generosity of the people of Mercer County that we are able to continue to feed the many hungry people in our communities. (This is by no means a full list and is in no particular order, just a few of the MANY people and organizations who have contributed financially and/or contributed their time. We are thankful for all of you!)

- Our wonderful Board of Directors
- Allstate Insurance Agents: Gino Nicastro, Gary Ceremuga, Brian Holzshu, John O'Malley, Brian Ralph
- Jack Buncher Foundation
- Sandy Waltenbaugh and the Sharon High School Interact Club
- Quota Club of Hermitage
- Walmart Foundation
- NLMK
- Community Foundation of Western PA & Eastern OH
- First Presbyterian Church of Sharon
- Greenville Savings Bank
- Terry Day & USW Local Union 1016
- D'onofrio's
- Mel Grata Chevrolet
- PNC Bank
- UPMC Health Plan
- New Deal Club
- 3-D Equipment
- Giant Eagle
- Dunkin' Donuts
- Autosoft DMS
- Jim Sheasley
- Jim and Karen Zorzi
- Joe and Mary Ann Walsh
- Sherwin Williams
- American Legion Sharon Post 299
- Cashdollar & Associates
- Daffin's Candies
- DJ's Greenhouse
- First National Bank
- Greenville Moose Family Center Lodge #276
- Kraynak's
- Mel and Marti Grata & the staff of Mel Grata Chevrolet
- Mike Fleming Plumbing
- Sharon Regional Health System
- Shenango Valley Corvette Club
- Terri Hessman and West Middlesex High School's Service Learning Class

