



Food Pantry volunteers (Camilla and Kathy) stand next to fresh produce selections available in the pantry.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

For the over 150 families that use the Flat River Outreach Ministries' (FROM's) Food Pantry each month, it's about more than just a meal. Monica Light, FROM Client Services Coordinator, says the pantry not only provides healthy food for individuals and families and helps them make ends meet but "it exemplifies FROM's desire to walk alongside our neighbors in need; it's neighbors helping neighbors."

Pantry participants shop the food pantry shelves monthly and can choose from a wide variety of healthy foods. Everyone who comes to the pantry first meets with Monica who signs them in, checks to see how things are going, and updates their information as needed. Then they receive a shopping card (specific to their family size) which lets them know the number of items they can choose from each category while they shop.

While people may think a Food Pantry is about just providing a meal, it really is so much more. Sally* (FROM Food Pantry participant and volunteer) says, "The food pantry helps to supplement my income so I have enough for other necessities each month. It helps with the basics in food so I can continue paying my way for everything else. I could not stay in my home without the supplemental help I get at FROM and I know I wouldn't be able to eat as healthy as I do now without the food pantry."

FROM relies on volunteers throughout the organization; it's just another way that neighbors can help neighbors. Volunteers cite a number of reasons for why they donate their time, but sometimes they do so as a way of saying "thank you" for receiving help. Sally says one of the many reasons she volunteers is, "because it's a way to pay back for all the wonderful support I receive, but it also helps me feel of worth, gives me great social opportunities and it encourages me to do what I can to help others. Plus it just feels good!"

Sally also helps her neighbors by encouraging those in need to come to the pantry because "it's been such a benefit to me and I'm just so grateful. FROM is such a blessing for the people of Lowell."



The Food Pantry offers canned, fresh, frozen and refrigerated items.

What's New

Foodmobile Changes its Name

Foodmobile is now called the Mobile Food Pantry. The program will continue to offer healthy food options through Feeding America West Michigan, but will now be called a Mobile Food Pantry. The program, held once a month on Saturdays, partners with local churches to provide food for those living in the Lowell Area School District and are in need of food. For upcoming Mobile Food Pantry dates, visit www.fromlowell.org/calendar

Christmas Distribution Revamped

In an effort to make sure all FROM programs are being provided in a way that focuses on dignity to all those involved, our Christmas Distribution (both toys and gifts) will undergo some changes starting in 2019. Look for more information this fall for those who wish to sign-up, volunteer or donate.

**Name has been changed*

Volunteer Spotlight: Ada Christian Reformed Church; an Answer to Prayer

In 2017, the FROM Board of Directors was discussing purchasing a vehicle to help with food pick-ups for the Food Pantry and Lunch Buddies programs. After much research and debate the Board voted to put the idea on hold in the fall of 2017, due to the financial cost. The very next day, Jan Hollander from Ada Christian Reformed Church called and said they had been praying about how could they best use a newly purchased church van. In their research, they had visited different non-profits and liked what they saw at FROM and wanted to know if there was a way we could use the van and a volunteer driver!



Jan began volunteering in October of 2017 and in April 2018, Michael Myslajek joined him. They have driven the Ada CRC van many miles for FROM and have volunteered weekly (sometimes more!). They pick up food for the food pantry and Lunch Buddies and have also picked up pies for Christmas Distribution, food after various food drives, lettuce from a local farm (Jan even harvested it from the field before loading up the van!) and bikes during Christmas time. They have also delivered and picked up



Food Fight and Christmas collection barrels around town. Any need we have had, they have been more than willing to help.



“What I love about this partnership is that it’s a demonstration of the power of prayer, on the part of both FROM and Ada CRC, and how when FROM has a need God just fills it in ways that we can’t even imagine,” says Dawn Broene, FROM Executive Director. “We were originally looking for a van, but God also connected us with some wonderful volunteers who have been such a blessing to us.”

Director Spotlight

Since fall of 2018, FROM has been making a shift in the foods we offer, focusing on providing more healthy foods throughout all of our food programs. We adopted a Healthy Food Policy (read more about it at www.fromlowell.org/foodpantry) and began implementing changes, but knew we needed additional help from the experts. Partnering with Grand Valley State University’s Dietetics internship program allows us to work with interns from the program for six weeks to help incorporate lasting changes.



Our first intern, graduate student Bettina Jones, spent this Spring focused on writing guidelines that helped define the Healthy Food Policy. She made the policy user friendly for the staff and volunteers in the food programs (including teaching them how to read labels) and implemented changes in the Lunch Buddies program to increase the nutritional content of the foods we provide. Graduate student Courtney Waddell started in July and will spend her time focused on continuing to implement healthy food changes in the Food Pantry.

We are so thankful for the support we have received while instituting changes and are so blessed to be a part of such a giving and supportive community.

Warmly,

Dawn Broene

Thank you to everyone who donated to help make this our biggest Food Fight yet!
The following organizations supported FROM with 1,000 or more in food or financial gifts which helped us meet and exceed our goal!

THANK
YOU!

Food Fight 2019



TEAM NORTH WINS!

THANK YOU to everyone who made food and financial donations.
Because of your support we raised over \$125,000!!!

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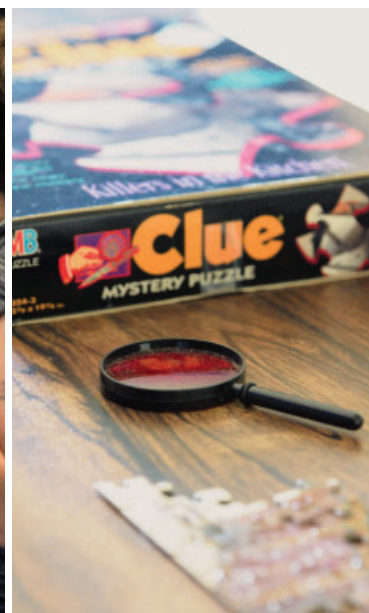
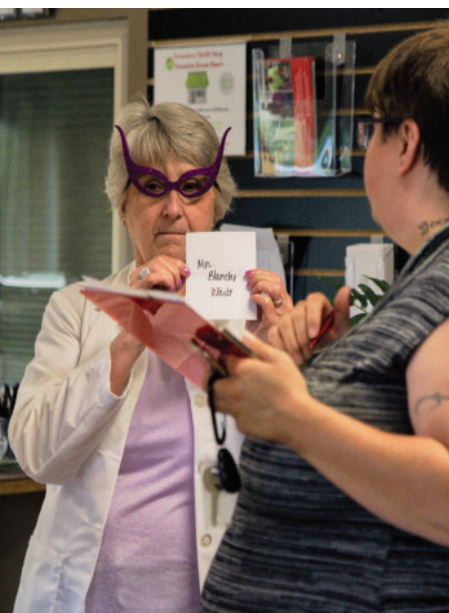
Live Action Clue Night

On June 11, nearly 50 people helped FROM celebrate the end of Food Fight with a family-friendly Live Action Clue night. Old and new friends of FROM gathered to figure out whodunit while learning a little more about the organization.



Attendees searched the building and talked to characters to find clues in a live twist on the classic board game. Light refreshments and lawn games were on hand before and after the detectives began their search.

Many people solved the crime so the two teams with the most creative motive (determined by the characters) walked away with gift certificates to Treasures Thrift Shop. Thanks to everyone who came out to have fun and support FROM!



IMPORTANT DATES

August 2: Last day to register online for Backpacks

August 6, 1:00-6:00: Lunch Buddies

August 7, 6:00-7:00: Volunteer Orientation

August 7-9: Senior Food Commodities
(during Food Pantry hours)

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August 10, 9:00-2:00: Backpack Distribution
(pre-registration required online by August 2)

August 13, 1:00-6:00: Lunch Buddies and Backpack
Distribution (Backpacks must pre-register online by August 2)

August 15, 1:00-2:00: Volunteer Orientation

August 24, 10:00: Mobile Food Pantry at FROM