



The Food Pantries Newsletter - Summer 2024

Welcome to the 3rd edition of our monthly email newsletter!

How are you doing? How are we doing? Your feedback is always appreciated. Let us know if there's something you'd like us to cover or address in future newsletters.

Thanks so much for your interest and support!



(photo credit: Sam

Shipherd - Unity House Food Pantry and employee Shondaya Burrell)

Hunger Doesn't Take a Summer Vacation - Pantries See Increased Need With Kids Home From School

Food Pantries across the coalition have seen increased service levels since 2022, when Pandemic-related Government benefits were removed. Unfortunately, with inflation, increased housing costs, and other factors, service levels continue to rise. Lynne Fuierer, Pantry Coordinator at First Church in Albany (FCIA), laid out the numbers:

"From January 2022 to June 2022, FCIA served 859 guests. In 2024 from January to June, FCIA helped 3,600 guests - **an increase of 319%**. Within this same time frame, the number of

children aged 17 and under from families visiting our pantry **surged a staggering 658%!**"

One factor that affects pantries on a seasonal basis is kids being home from school for the summer and the loss of free meals that many families depend on. Programs like [Summer Meals](#) do excellent work to offset that loss, by offering free meals to children at sites around the Capital District, but they aren't able to reach every family, and pantries feel and meet that increased need.

Shakeemah Dixon, Health & Wellness Operations Supervisor at Trinity Alliance, which operates the Arbor Hill and South End Food Pantries, said "Yes, most definitely" when asked if they felt the increase due to school being out. She added, "even with emergencies", meaning they're seeing an increase in families that usually attend the pantry or live in their service area, but also from those that are visiting the pantry in an emergency situation and live outside their service area.

Stats from our Referral Team demonstrate the summer service bump with a record 1,005 referrals in July. That's compared to an average of 890 referrals per month during the 23-24 school year, a 13% increase.

If you would like to help us support local food pantries in meeting the increased needs of our community, [please consider making a donation today.](#)

Retirement Tribute to Judy Becker - Bread of Life Food Pantry (Rotterdam)

It is bittersweet to share that Judy Becker, Pantry Director at the Bread of Life Food Pantry in Rotterdam, retired in June 2024. Judy's dedication, compassion and collaborative spirit have been an invaluable asset to our coalition and the community she



serves. Alan D. Wolfelt said "Food is symbolic of love when words are inadequate". Over the years, Judy has spread this love, her love, throughout her community. Providing those in need with food, with love and always, with a sweet smile on her face. Thank you, Judy, for all that you have done, and will continue to do. Your tireless efforts have made a profound impact in your community and beyond.

For a beautiful tribute to Judy from her son Rich, check out his [FB Post here.](#)

If you would like to connect with the Bread of Life Food Pantry, check out [their page on the Rotterdam Community Center website.](#)

(Photo credit: Rich Becker)

The Food Pantries for the Capital District Board of Directors Update:

We are happy to announce Dr. Angela Pearson has completed her term as President of the Board and we welcome Incoming-President Sarah Trela as she steps into this important role.

Please join us in thanking both of these amazing volunteer leaders for their work and dedication in helping guide our organization.

We also want to acknowledge our appreciation to Dr. Pearson for continuing her service on the Board.

**Thank You to Past-President Dr. Angela Pearson!
&
Welcome to Incoming President Sarah Trela!**

We asked both presidents to share some thoughts on The Food Pantries and their roles with our organization:



Past-President: Dr. Angela Pearson

What are you most proud of when thinking of your tenure as Board President?

"I am most proud of the collaboration of the NYS Community Food Assistance Network and The Food Pantries to create The Alliance for a Hunger Free New York. The advocacy work both organizations are doing supports the need to end food insecurity in NYS."

What advice or suggestions do you have for the next Board President?

"The advice I have for the next Board President is to continue to get involved as much as possible in the community to educate and advocate for those who need us the most. There are so many ways we can encourage individuals and organizations to become and stay involved in this fight to end food insecurity. Who would not desire to be a part of that?"



Incoming President: Sarah Trela

"The Food Pantries for the Capital District is an organization near and dear to my heart. Natasha Pernicka and her talented team are hard at work each day fighting food insecurity, advocating for those in need, and ensuring our food pantries are prepared to serve individuals and families through a variety of impactful events and programs. I was thrilled to join the Board in 2020, and it is an honor to step into the role of Board President. There is meaningful work happening at The Food Pantries to ensure community resources are easily accessible to all. I am proud to be involved in this valuable mission and hope you will join me in supporting our efforts!"

Save the Date! - 13th Annual Harvest Evening Celebration

We hope you will join us on Thursday,

October 24 at Franklin Plaza in Troy for our 13th Annual Harvest Evening Celebration to benefit The Food Pantries!

This is a major fundraising event for our organization and it's a night that we look forward to every year. One of the many highlights is always the "The Food Pantry Chef's Challenge" in which local chefs create tastings incorporating food items commonly stocked at our local pantries.

Interested in sponsoring the event or donating items for the silent auction? Click the link below to learn more.

Tickets and More info: [2024 Harvest Evening Celebration](#)

**13TH ANNUAL
HARVEST EVENING CELEBRATION**
TO BENEFIT THE FOOD PANTRIES FOR THE CAPITAL DISTRICT

Presented by:

FENIMORE
ASSET MANAGEMENT
Manager of the **FAM FUNDS**

**Join Honorary Chair
Reneé Abdou-Malta**



**Thursday, October 24
Franklin Plaza, Troy**

Mission Moments of the Month - Feedback from a Guest and Pantry Coordinator about our Food As Medicine program:

"The program is really helpful. I'm learning more about my diabetes and how to choose my foods. I'm already seeing better control of my blood sugar." - Food As Medicine Participant

"I love being able to help people improve their health, talking to them each week about their food needs and nutrition priorities, and the gratitude that the program participants show!" - Linda Chen - Pantry Coordinator at Salvation Army Albany

More info on [Food As Medicine news and programs here](#)

How You Can Help - Volunteering, Special Events, Grow A Row



1st year students from Albany Medical College recently volunteered with The Food Pantries as part of their annual Day of Service.

Students helped to prepare food and other items for distribution to pantries at



Last month, RPI Tau Epsilon Phi alumni including Glenn Dewell, Joe Salvo and Phil Hoke celebrated their 50th anniversary reunion by putting on a benefit concert at The Rustic Barn Pub in support of The Food Pantries.

These rock stars raised \$800



This is John Petiet. John stops by our office every week with a bounty of fresh vegetables that he and his wife Beverly grow in their home garden. Along with having some serious green thumbs, John and Beverly

our warehouse space, rode along with a Food Shuttle driver and helped us distribute information and produce at The Center for Law and Justice's Resource Fair.

We love working with groups on volunteer projects. Want to get involved? Just reach out!

to support our work. Thanks so much to Glenn, Joe, Phil and everyone else who participated!

Interested in supporting us through your special event? Get in touch! We would love to collaborate with you!

are generously helping us in the fight against food insecurity by participating in the "Grow a Row" program, which encourages gardeners to donate extra produce so that we can distribute it out to local pantries and get it into the hands of local families.

If you'd like to help provide families with healthy, fresh, local produce, send us a message or just stop by!

Thanks so much for reading our Summer 2024 Newsletter! If you would like to get involved, please reach out to us for info on [volunteering](#), [hosting a special event](#), [getting involved with "Grow a Row"](#), or any other ideas you have. You can reply directly to this email or follow the links to connect with a member of our team. We would love to hear from you and we greatly appreciate your support and participation in our work to end hunger in the Capital District.

Together we can do more than any one of us alone!

Donate



The Food Pantries for the Capital District | 32 Essex Street | Albany, NY 12206 US

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