

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE FOOD PANTRIES FOR THE CAPITAL DISTRICT

FEBRUARY 2022



# LIFEWORKS COMMUNITY ACTION FOOD PANTRY

"WE COULDN'T DO WHAT WE DO WITHOUT THIS PARTNERSHIP. IT'S A HUGE HELP AND ONE THAT WE'VE REALLY APPRECIATED."  
-ANGELO CALBONE

## COALITION MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Formally known as Saratoga County Economic Opportunity Council (EOC), LifeWorks is primarily a delivery food pantry located in Ballston Spa, NY and proud members of the Community Action Agency for Saratoga.

With a strong belief that everyone should be treated with respect and dignity, LifeWorks serves the entire Saratoga county. That means that everyone who comes to them receives services. Their spirit of collaboration is seen through partnerships with various organizations, including other food pantries, in order to expand delivery services in the Northern Capital Region.



Director of Community Services, Angelo Calbone



Deputy Director, Krystle Nowhitney Hernandez (left) and Executive Director, Jo Anne Hume (right)

LifeWorks recently rolled out an online ordering system called Smart Choice, which gives clients the ability to place an order online and schedule a pickup or a delivery. Since the rollout, they've nearly doubled their service levels. Through Smart Choice, clients are able to choose exactly what they want, comparable to the grocery delivery service, Instacart. The system is live, too. That means that what they have on the shelves is what appears in the system. Their pantry is set up similar to a real grocery store, with aisles labeled by letter to make items easier to find when packing bags or updating inventory.



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Angelo Calbone, the Director of Community Services, says monetary donations can be challenging. He notes that even though the food pantry is part of a large organization, the pantry itself still operates independently and is very grassroots in nature. He told us they're always in need of a variety of healthy foods, with a focus on low sugar and low sodium, as well as personal hygiene and household cleanliness items. However, all donations are welcome, and go directly towards the operations of the food pantry, which helps them to continue serving the community.

Volunteering is another extremely important area where people can help. LifeWorks is currently looking for Delivery Driver Volunteers Tuesday-Friday mornings, as well as Pantry Volunteers Monday-Friday from 8am-4pm.



LIFEWORKS COMMUNITY ACTION FOOD PANTRY  
39 BATH ST. BALLSTON SPA, NY 12020  
(518) 288-3206  
[LIFEWORKSACTION.ORG](http://LIFEWORKSACTION.ORG)

# ARTIST LEXI HANNAH



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

WE'RE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THE COMPLETION OF THE FOOD PANTRIES MURAL BY ARTIST LEXI HANNAH.

Years in the making, the idea for a mural was first pitched in 2019. When the pandemic hit and everything shut down, it was put on hold. In 2021, Lexi was awarded a grant to fund the project through the Decentralization Grant program in New York, administered by The Arts Center of the Capital Region. And finally, in 2022, the mural has been completed and will soon be displayed at The Food Pantries' office.

The idea for the mural developed when Lexi began designing a series of custom digital graphics created for The Food Pantries. These included common items found in food pantries, like produce, shelf stable foods, household cleanliness items, and personal hygiene products. A visual identity was formed, as was the conceptualization for the mural. The graphics became an important focal point for the mural, alongside a recognizable Capital Region citiscape and a New York State rural landscape with the familiar Food Pantries delivery truck. Together, the three brought to life a visual representation of the mission for The Food Pantries for the Capital District.

Lexi was also able to successfully raise nearly \$4,000 for The Food Pantries through an online fundraiser she facilitated in conjunction with the mural.



Through her passion and skill, Lexi has created something special for The Food Pantries that will add a dash of color to our daily work life and serve as a reminder of the reason we do what we do.

*We'd like to express our utmost gratitude to Lexi, from all of us here at The Food Pantries for the Capital District.*

"I'M THRILLED TO DEMONSTRATE HOW ART CAN BE USED TO BUILD BRIDGES AND MAKE AN IMPACT ON OUR COMMUNITY."

*Lexi Hannah*

LEXI HANNAH  
@LEXIHANNAH.ART  
[LEXIHANNAH.STUDIO](https://www.lexihannah.studio)

# HOME DELIVERY



## PROGRAM FEATURE

Many of our community members experience barriers to accessing food resources. This can be one of their greatest challenges. Because of that, The Food Pantries' Home Delivery program was one born out of necessity. We were aware of a need for home delivery prior to the pandemic. COVID-19 greatly exacerbated the issue. Because our delivery is no contact, we often work with guests and families who are under official quarantine and unable to leave their homes.

Through the program, we provide delivery services throughout our catchment area. We partner with 15 food pantries throughout the Capital Region, and all are either members of our coalition or CFAN members.

Here's how it works: the pantries pack the groceries, and we provide the home delivery service for those pantries who don't have the capacity to deliver themselves. A day of the week is assigned to a pantry, and therefore, the system works the same for all counties. As people who need home delivery call in for food assistance, the referral team answering their calls assess the best way to meet their needs. If a guest requires a home delivery, we work to schedule it based on county and urgency. Through our database platform, Oasis Insight, we refer the guest information to the pantry, and pantries will then connect with the family prior to delivery. Because our delivery is no contact, we also work with guests and families who are under official quarantine and are unable to leave their homes.

*This crucial work is almost entirely funded by philanthropy. Without our generous donors, it wouldn't be possible.*

## NUMBER OF REQUESTS FOR FOOD ASSISTANCE RECEIVED BY THE FOOD PANTRIES' REFERRAL TEAM OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS

**2019**

2,441

**2020**

4,139

**2021**

7,633

# MEET THE TEAM

**CONGRATULATIONS TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATASHA PERNICKA AND ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ANGIE PENDER-FOX ON 10 TRANSFORMATIVE YEARS AT THE FOOD PANTRIES FOR THE CAPITAL DISTRICT**

With a walk down memory lane, Natasha and Angie recall what it was like 10 years ago when they first began their commitment to alleviating hunger here in the Capital Region. At that time, there were only four office employees, two drivers, and two main volunteers (shoutout to Dave Cleveland and Deb Webster who are still with The Food Pantries today). Everyone did everything, and they would often take turns answering calls from families and individuals seeking food assistance. When they started, some pantries carried fresh produce, but most only had shelf stable foods. The main difference, Natasha recalls, was the focus on education rather than advocacy.

Fast forward to today, and it becomes apparent just how much the organization has grown over the years. Both Natasha and Angie agree that the growth primarily came from beginning to look at “filling the gap”. Programs and initiatives, the referral team, as well as an innovative web based food resource map were all the result of trying to connect more people to services. Almost all pantries in the coalition carry fresh produce now, which has been made possible through advocacy regarding issues of access to healthy food. Oasis, the universal database that allows for the sharing of information and helps to inform decisions moving forward as a coalition, was also introduced. The data collected allows members to work together to find solutions to common problems. Another major step forward was the formation of The Regional Food Assistance Network in 2019, and the creation of the statewide Food Assistance Network in 2020.

“IT FEELS REALLY GOOD TO SEE THAT WE LIVE OUR MISSION,” NATASHA SAYS.

So, what’s in store for the future? The number one way to end hunger is for people to be paid a living wage. And although that’s out of our control, the food pantry system is not. Making sure pantries have the resources they need in order to provide the best services possible, is our priority. One way we hope to achieve that in the future is through contracts that pay food pantries to provide their services. Building a stronger healthy food supply chain in the Capital Region is also important. By continuing advocacy beyond our pantry system and building a stronger network, we’ll be able to increase nutritious food consumption, access, and education.

*None of this would be possible without our members, donors, and volunteers.*



*Executive Director, Natasha Pernicka (left) and Associate Executive Director, Angie Pender-Fox (right)*

“WHAT HAS KEPT US HERE FOR 10 YEARS? WE WORK HARD AND WE LAUGH HARD,”  
NATASHA GIGGLES.

“AND WHY HAVE I STAYED? OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IS SO TRUE TO OUR MISSION,  
AND HAS A GREAT VISION. BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN OUR MISSION AND I KNOW SHE  
BELIEVES IN OUR MISSION, IT MAKES ME SO PROUD TO WORK HERE,”  
ANGIE PENDER-FOX SAYS.

# THANK YOU TO THOSE WHO MADE A GIFT TO THE FOOD PANTRIES IN HONOR OR IN MEMORY OF A LOVED ONE

DECEMBER 13, 2021 - FEBRUARY 17, 2022

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### FOODSTOCK - A BENEFIT CONCERT FOR THE FOOD PANTRIES FOR THE CAPITAL DISTRICT

Sunday, March 6th 2-8pm  
Rustic Barn Pub  
150 Speigletown Rd.  
Troy, NY 12182  
*All are welcome!*

### ALBANY PATROONS BASKETBALL GAME WITH COACH WILL BROWN - TO BENEFIT THE FOOD PANTRIES FOR THE CAPITAL DISTRICT

Sunday, April 10th 2pm  
Washington Avenue Armory  
195 Washington Ave.  
Albany, NY 12210  
*Family friendly!*

*Special halftime court appearance by Executive Director of The Food Pantries for the Capital District, Natasha Pernicka.*

### CANSTRUCTION HUNGER HEROES FOOD AND FUND DRIVE - TO BENEFIT THE FOOD PANTRIES FOR THE CAPITAL DISTRICT

February 14th - March 28th  
*All are welcome to participate!*  
To register as a 2022 Hunger Hero, click [here](#).

## GIFTS MADE IN HONOR OF...

**Judy & Robert Bellamy**  
Tyler Bellamy

**Donna Broyles**  
Edward Ondriska  
Sharon Ondriska

**Cathi & Peter Butryn**  
David Nowak

**Dan, Grant, MacKenzie, & Tatum Casey**  
Vincent Falvo

**Robert Cramer**  
Nancy Engel

**Lynn & Neil Cummings**  
Lauren Cummings

**Michelle Depace**  
Samantha Hancox-Li

**Bill Geltzeiler**  
Steven Geltzeiler

**Thomas Hamel**  
Elizabeth Hamel

**Lexi Hannah**  
Steven Geltzeiler

**Eileen & John Kruczlnicki**  
Noreen K. Smith

**Alice Lee**  
Willard Lee

**Debbie Lee**  
Marie & Mike Lee

**Ann Mastrodonato**  
Paul Mastrodonato

**John & Lisa Meyer**  
Vincent Falvo

**Deborah Panitch**  
William Wertz

**Eric Powell**  
Collin Hutchinson

**Philip Rickey**  
Team Rickey

**Barbara Nazerewicz & Tyler Robinson**  
Bruce & Jane Blumberg

**Pepper Sarrantonio**  
Tim Sarrantonio

**Al & Jeanne Schrempf**  
Michael Schrempf

**Aime Simon**  
Julie Simon

**Ken & Marggie Skinner**  
Pamela Skinner

**Steve Winters**  
Noreen Prenty

## GIFTS MADE IN MEMORY OF...

**June Theresa Baker**  
Steve & Tammi Sossei

**Linda Engel's Father**  
Patricia Stack

**Joan Gannon**  
Phyllis Cooney

**Kevin Halloran**  
Patricia Lawrence

**Albert J. Hirt**  
Timothy Hirt

**John L. Meid**  
Elizabeth Meid

**Riley**  
Krista Dobis

**Bruce Sowalski**  
Bowman Lake Association  
Marilyn Eberle  
Bill Harris & Holly Katz  
Valerie West

**Angel Toby**  
Minxyinbedlam

**Michele Wadsworth**  
Suzanne Wadsworth

**William E. Wadsworth**  
Suzanne Wadsworth

## DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly the entire operating budget of The Food Pantries for the Capital District is paid for by contributions from our generous donors. We love our volunteers. In many areas, they give so much of their time and energy. And we love our donors too! Without your generosity The Food Pantries simply couldn't exist.

AS ONE DONOR PUT IT,

"I JUST WANT TO DO WHAT I CAN FOR MY NEIGHBORS WHO NEED SOME HELP TO GET BY."

Help a neighbor:

- Make a one-time gift online at [thefoodpantries.org](http://thefoodpantries.org)
- Mail your check to: The Food Pantries, 32 Essex Street, Albany, NY 12206
- Call us at (518) 458-1167

You can often double or triple your gift if your employer has a Matching Gift program. We can help you find out if they do!

If you would like to speak to our staff about a multi-year gift intention, please contact Peter Koniuto at (518) 458-1167 ext 103, or [peterk@thefoodpantries.org](mailto:peterk@thefoodpantries.org).

Have you considered including The Food Pantries in your estate plans? We'd love to hear about it! There are many ways of making a Legacy Gift to support this important work. Contact Peter Koniuto to learn more.

## THE FOOD PANTRIES ARE IN THE NEWS

TIMES UNION - First Capital Region grocery store launches program that can double some SNAP dollars  
Read article [here](#).

TIMES UNION - Keeping people fed during lean times  
Read article [here](#).

NEWS10 - Area food pantries make push to fill the food insecurity void  
Read article [here](#).