The pantry at Grace Fellowship was introduced in 2011 by the church’s outreach program and has grown steadily ever since. Since the pantry’s inception the number of families they support has grown from roughly 25 people to 93 at their most recent distribution. Every time they have needed support, it has miraculously been provided. In 2013, Geraldine (also known as “Lady P”) took over running the pantry, but could not do it alone; she prayed for help, and soon after Patti came into the picture.

Patti had previously been involved in a different food pantry, and was glad to offer some suggestions to Lady P on how to take it over. The two met at an outreach meeting through their church. “It feels like we’ve known each other for many years,” Patti said. “One of us will have a change we want to make in the pantry and when we share it, the other had a similar thought.” When the two started working together, their food was displayed on tables, and they felt the pantry was in need of shelves. Again, support was provided. A friend of Patti’s husband happened to be getting rid of 7 large shelves, and gave them to the pantry.

The pantry strongly values its commitment to their patrons. Originally, they encouraged their patrons to arrive just before distribution began. Despite this, patrons would line up even in the cold of winter to wait for the pantry to open its doors. Hearing the community members’ voices and wanting to work with them, Patti and Lady P decided to begin opening their doors earlier and created a waiting room. This room has now become a space for gathering and community.

The pantry at Grace Fellowship also offers additional resources through community contacts. Every August they have a backpack giveaway. Last year, 600 children received new school bags filled with supplies. In one event, Comcast gave out over 100 computers, plus a year’s worth of free internet, to families with children and without computers. Occasionally, doctors conduct medical screenings for patrons. Additionally, in the summer of 2014, the pantry at Grace Fellowship connected with the Washtenaw County Sheriff Community Work Program. The program provides individuals the opportunity to participate in community service opposed to incarceration. “The work crew has been a blessing to us,” Lady P said. The two stated that the participants’ work at the pantry goes beyond the Work Program, since many workers in the program often return as volunteers.
Q & A WITH PATTI AND LADY P

What is something people may be surprised to learn about your program?
Patti - We carry all of our patrons groceries, and we let them choose what they want. We give them a spot to keep their groceries as they go from one room to another, and a volunteer pushes their cart full of groceries to their car, and brings it back inside. We want to serve them.

What is something that you think sets your program apart from others?
Patti - Food is a really big deal in both of our lives. I consider really good food to be medicine that can heal you. Lady P - We have zero requirements. If you need food, you’re walking into our pantry and you’re getting food.

What is your favorite thing about running a food pantry?
Lady P - What keeps me going is seeing the smiles on people’s faces.
Patti - The relationships developed.

In the pictures below, Lady P and Patti are getting set up for a food distribution!

WELCOME LAURA & KATE!

Laura Burton and Kate Sorofman are Master of Social Work students who have joined Food Gatherers for their internship! Their studies focus on community organization at the University of Michigan. Laura will be with us through the summer and Kate will complete her internship in the spring. Their regular schedule this semester will be Mondays and Thursdays from 8am-4pm.

While some of their work will overlap, Laura will be focusing on our Healthy School Pantry Program and community outreach and Kate will focus on our partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and SNAP outreach. Laura and Kate will be supervised by Erin Freeman, CFP Coordinator and licensed social worker.

Laura Burton

CFP/Social Work Intern
Laura is an intern from the School of Social Work at the University of Michigan and is currently working toward her MSW. Her areas of focus are Community Organization and Community & Social Systems.

Kate Sorofman

CFP/Social Work Intern
Kate is an intern from the University of Michigan School of Social Work. As a community organizer she is especially interested in engaging community voice and capacity building for community empowerment.
Rockin’ for the Hungry

Wednesday, November 30 - Sunday, December 4

Food Gatherers volunteers and radio personalities from Ann Arbor's 107one will be “freezin’ for a reason” at our largest annual outdoor food and fund drive, broadcast live from Kroger on South Maple Road. Gifts during Rockin’ will be matched dollar-for-dollar by community donors Harold and Kay Peplau and Irene Fast.

Participate by dropping off food or cash donations, purchasing food to donate or making a donation at the register. Sign up to volunteer by emailing volunteer@foodgatherers.org.

WHEN:
Nov 29 is #GivingTuesday.
Rockin’s kick-off is Nov 29th from 6am-10am.
November 30th-December 3rd 6am-7pm.
The last day is December 4th from 6am-4pm.

WHERE:
Nov 29 at Kroger, 3615 Washtenaw Ave, Ann Arbor
Nov 30 – Dec 4 at Kroger, 400 S Maple Road, Ann Arbor

HARVEST HINTS

Winter Squash

Winter Squash (such as acorn, butternut or pumpkin) contain potassium and Vitamin A Beta-carotene, which are good for healthy skin, eyes and heart!

How to Roast a Squash

1. Pierce squash 3-4 times with a sharp knife. Microwave on high for 4 minutes to soften skin.
2. Cut squash in half and remove seeds.
3. Place in baking dish, cut side down.
4. Bake at 375°F for 1 hour or until tender.
5. Remove from oven and let cool. Scoop out squash and place in bowl.

Cooking and storage tips:

* Use a good vegetable peeler to remove skin before roasting.
* Cut peeled and seeded squash into cubes before roasting.
* Store squash in a cool, dry place for to 3 months, or on your counter for 3 weeks.

Butternut Squash Pancakes

Ingredients:
1 and ½ cups mashed roasted squash (or any pureed fruit, like bananas, apricots, strawberries, pumpkin or sweet potato)
1 and ½ cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cinnamon (optional)
1 tablespoon sugar (optional)
3 eggs
1 ½ - 2 cups milk
Butter, oil or cooking spray

Directions:
1. Heat a griddle or large skillet over medium-low heat while you make the batter.
2. In a bowl, combine flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon and sugar.
3. Separately, beat the eggs into 1 ½ cups milk; then stir in fruit or vegetable puree.
4. Gently stir wet mixture into dry ingredients until mostly smooth. If batter seems too thick, add a little more milk.
5. Use a little butter, oil or cooking spray on the griddle or skillet each time you cook batter. Ladle batter onto griddle or skillet and cook.
6. Flip when bubbles appear in center of pancakes and bottom side is cooked and golden brown (2-4 minutes)

Note: Recipes makes 4-6 pancakes. Layer left-over pancakes between wax paper and store in freezer in a plastic storage bag for up to 6 months. Substitute ¼ cup whole wheat flour for ¼ cup white flour for a hearty, whole-grain pancake.

Recipe adapted from Mark Bittman
Made with love by the Community Food Programs Department

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