

From the Director:

By the time you see this, we will be almost through March! Yikes, the year is flying by!

January and February are typically quiet times at our food pantry. We are just coming off the holidays or what we fondly refer to as donation season. Patrons are taking advantage of income-tax refunds and buying what they can with those funds, so we typically see lower family counts. Schools have gotten back into the routine after the holidays and are trudging through what can be the most trying quarter, and poof, here we are in March, and it is spring break time!



In anticipation of being able to open our doors to patrons someday, we are proactively working to provide our patrons and volunteers the best possible experience. We are polling patrons and asking what *they* would like to do: Continue with drive-through distributions; come into the pantry to select items; or a combination of both. We also have been asking what we can do differently: Is the food we are packing what they need? Would they like to see something different? We are checking the pulse, you might say.

It is interesting to hear the responses as we had some preconceived ideas on what was best for our families. They are enlightening us. It seems COVID has brought another good thing: discussion – so we learn to ask and don't assume. As we move forward, we as a pantry organization hope to make the best decisions for both our patrons and volunteers.

Speaking of volunteers, those who do not winter in another climate this time of year continue to make life at the pantry wonderfully delightful. There is always some kind of laughter, sharing stories of grandkids, outings, exercise regimes and more. We have not broken out any tunes yet, but I look forward to that day very soon!



If you have thoughts or ideas, please share. We try not to “ick anybody’s wow,” but rather entertain ideas and suggestions.

Our motto, “Building a Community One Meal at a Time,” reminds me of a quote by Mother Teresa: “If you can’t feed 100 people, then feed just one.” With your help, WE will do just that.

Till the next time,

Kris Ballweg



**SAUK PRAIRIE
A · R · E · A
FOOD PANTRY**

Quick things

Last time, I shared that we started a new program called **Go Fresh!** I am excited to report that the last school starting the program is Tower Rock. March 21st will be their first delivery! We made our goal, all schools on board by March! YAY!

Even though **COVID restrictions** are starting to wind down in many areas, we at the pantry are still under the guidance of The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and will continue with drive-through distributions as well as mask-wearing for volunteers and staff.

By the numbers:

In 2021, Sauk Prairie Area Food Pantry served 1,155 families ...

- 1,320 adults (18-60)
- 769 children (0-18)
- 459 seniors (>60)
- For a total of 2,548 people!

Coming next time:

- I'd like you to meet ...
- More about our donors and donations
- Closer look at the annexes



Meet our Pantry Assistant, Jaime Patterson

Jaime lives in Prairie du Sac with her husband Ryan and their three school-age boys, Christian, Louie and Jordy. Jaime became familiar with the pantry by volunteering at distributions. She later was invited to be a pantry board member and now is Kris' right-hand person.



Jaime oversees the annex program in the schools. Each annex is an extension of the pantry. Think of it as a mini-pantry that provides food and/or snacks to students in the district. Snacks include fresh fruits and vegetables from the **Go Fresh!** program. You may see Jaime wheeling her cart full of snacks or lugging cases of bananas and other goodies for students to fill a hunger void during the school day.

Jaime is a warm, positive ray of sunshine and we are so lucky to have her as a member of the pantry team. If you happen to see Jaime, feel free to say hi and ask her about the annex or **Go Fresh!** programs. She would enjoy telling you about them!



What do we need at the pantry?

- Kids' cereal
- Canned meals
- Hamburger, Tuna, or Chicken Helper
- Any personal care items
- Boxed potatoes (au gratin, scalloped, hash-browns, etc.)
- Taco shells, tortilla shells

Sampling of recent donations ...

Merrimac Community School, under the leadership of Nancy Toberman, collected 288 pounds of food and personal care items. The goal was to collect 100 items as part of the 100 days of school celebration. The whole school was asked to bring items for the food pantry, but the kindergartners were in charge of counting all the items. MCS collected OVER 300 items! This was the 17th year for the food drive, but the Sauk Prairie Area Food Pantry only recently became the benefactor after the Merrimac Food Pantry closed. We are incredibly grateful and are so proud of the continued effort of Nancy, students and staff at MCS for all their help!

Grace Gonzalez's National Honor Society service project goal was to collect 300 rolls of toilet paper. She actually collected 400 rolls! Way to go, Grace, for exceeding your goal!

First United Church of Christ – Brigetta Brickl along with members of the congregation decorated, assembled and delivered 46 birthday bags for families with children 12 and younger who may have a birthday coming up. What an awesome way to help families celebrate!

Cub Scout Pack 373 and Boy Scout Troop 173 with Glaciers Edge Council hosted a Scouting for Food event. Through the use of door hangers and solicitation, the Scouts collected nearly 300 pounds of food and personal care items! Way to go, Scouts!

The **Wisconsin Focus on Energy** program generously donated several hundred LED lightbulbs that we have been sharing. What a great way to brighten a day and save energy to boot!

If you see any of these people or organizations, be sure to thank them for helping your Sauk Prairie Area Food Pantry. Without events and donations like these, we could not continue to serve those in our community who need a little help here and there.

How can you help?

[Click here](#) and check out current opportunities to help at the pantry. Check back often as opportunities can be added as the need changes. We would love to meet you and work with you!

Want to have a team-building exercise with your work team?

Email Kris Ballweg: director@spfoodpantry.org or call 608-571-7737 and she will help you make it happen!

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