

2025 March NEWSLETTER



Extended Hands Pantry

Our new truck delivers food three times a week to keep families fed.

But, Jenny and Andy remind us, **we need to finish paying for it!**

From Our Directors:

This year is off to a fast start! Our food pantry is busier than ever, reaching new milestones as the need for food assistance continues to grow. In January 2025 alone, the number of families visiting our pantry increased by 103% compared to the previous year. Even with a few days of extreme cold from the polar vortex, demand has remained high.

We recently surpassed serving 600 families per week, and over the past 12 months,



Don't let that face fool you, it was all smiles at the pantry.

we've distributed nearly 1.3 million pounds of food. With these steep increases comes an urgent need for more funding, more food, more

volunteers—more of everything! Did you know that Andy and I (Jenny) are volunteers too? We'd love for you to join us! There are plenty of ways to get involved—whether helping in the pantry, collecting and distributing school supplies, or assisting with our Christmas program later in the year. Have experience driving large equipment? We could use an extra driver for our refrigerated truck (a regular driver's license is all that's needed).

To our dedicated volunteers: you are the heart of this work. Your generosity, time, and compassion make a real difference, and we are incredibly grateful for your support.

As we look ahead, we need your help more than ever. Our ability to serve families in need depends on the kindness and commitment of people like you. Whether through donations, volunteering, or simply spreading the word, you can help us meet this overwhelming demand. Thank you for believing in our mission and for being part of this servant-hearted expression of love and community. Together, we can continue to make a meaningful impact!

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me,'" **Matthew 25:40.**

Thank you for your part in doing what you do for Jesus!

A Volunteer Who Needs a Job

Every Friday, we're lucky to be joined by a dedicated volunteer who exemplifies resilience and generosity. Having arrived in the United States just two months ago, she already plays an essential role at our pantry—helping unload the truck, distributing food, and keeping things organized, all with warmth and grace. Her commitment to serving others is especially inspiring given the personal challenges she faces. With degrees in Law, Language, and Leadership she brings both heart and invaluable skills to our team. She's eager to find employment—if you know of any job openings, please let us know!



Help Us With Our Truck

Thanks to the final portion of last year's one-time county grant, we were able to purchase a new refrigerated truck. This new truck is more than just a vehicle—it's a lifeline. It ensures the food we provide is kept at safe temperatures from pickup to distribution, protecting the health of our clients and reducing food waste. With our growing



operation, a reliable refrigerated truck isn't a luxury; it's a necessity.

We're grateful for the grant that allowed us to make this critical investment—but now we need your help to pay it off. Every donation, large or small, brings us closer to securing the transportation we need to serve our community safely and efficiently.



Andy checking out the new truck!

We're selling our previous truck, a 2016 model. If your business needs another addition to the fleet or if you know someone who does, send them our way. Donations can be made in check or through our website at www.extendedhandspantry.org/donate

Youth Groups at Festival Foods in Verona

We're sending a huge shout out to the incredible youth groups from **Asbury Church** and **Covenant Presbyterian Church** for hosting in-person food drives at Festival Foods on January 19th and January 25th! These dedicated young people braved the cold, greeted shoppers with smiles, and collected much-needed food for our pantry shelves. Their enthusiasm and hard work were truly inspiring—and their efforts will directly benefit families facing food insecurity in our community.

We also extend heartfelt thanks to **Festival Foods** for graciously hosting both events. Your partnership makes a real difference,

and we couldn't do this without your generous support.

To the youth, their leaders—Pastor Patricia Tristan and Rev. Megan Berry—and the entire Festival Foods team: thank you for standing with us in the fight against hunger. Your commitment helps us feed more families, spread kindness, and build a stronger, more compassionate community!

Does your youth group, community organization, or employee council want to make an impact? Follow the example of these inspiring young people—host a food drive, volunteer, or partner with us! Reach out today and let's work together to fight hunger and build hope.



Covenant Presbyterian Church Youth



Asbury Church Youth

More Families Every Day

Our pantry is experiencing **rapid expansion**—so much so that we've stopped publishing numbers in real time. Why? Because by the time a report is printed or a document is finalized, we've already surpassed those figures. This surge isn't limited to one day—it's happening **every Monday, Tuesday, and Friday**, with more families coming each week.

Like everyone else, we're feeling the squeeze of **rising food prices**, but our commitment stands firm: **if someone comes to us hungry, we will feed them**. No one should have to choose between paying rent and buying groceries, nor should children be forced to concentrate on school with an empty stomach.

However, this level of demand is something **we cannot meet alone**. We rely on people like you to help us bridge the gap. **Your support—whether through financial contributions, food donations, or volunteering—keeps our shelves stocked and our doors open to anyone in need.**

Tired, With Smiles

Last Friday, during a busy pantry session, one of our volunteers noticed a woman who looked a little weary, her eyes heavy with exhaustion. She wasn't a regular, but she also wasn't a stranger—we'd seen her before, just not every week.

When the volunteer gently asked how she was doing, the woman offered a tired smile and admitted she was running on empty. She had just come off a long third shift and hadn't yet been home to sleep. But food, she said, was more important this morning. Before she could rest, she needed to make sure her family had what they needed.

She gratefully accepted milk and cheese, her expression softening with

relief. Like so many others who came through our doors that day, she balanced her groceries carefully in her arms, her winter coat draped over one side. As she left, she paused at the door to say goodbye to our volunteers, offering a quiet but heartfelt "thank you" before stepping back into the world—still exhausted, but carrying the nourishment her family needed.

This is the reality for so many of our neighbors. Working long hours, juggling responsibilities, and sometimes sacrificing their own rest just to ensure their loved ones have enough to eat. Your support makes moments like this possible. It means a tired mother doesn't have to choose between sleep and feeding her family. It means dignity, nourishment, and a community that sees her struggle and steps in to help.



Shoppers choosing food for their families

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Extended Hands Pantry, EIN 83-4321269, is a Non-Profit 501(c)(3) organization and your contribution is tax deductible.