

Hi Everyone,

Whitehall-Coplay Hunger Initiative (WCHI) is working very diligently on opening our new Food Pantry at St John the Baptist Church, Christ the King School cafeteria in Stiles. Thank you Monsignor Gobitas and Barb Sukanick, who also want this Pantry to succeed and thrive. We hope to be open by mid-January. I will keep you posted on our progress as we get closer to January.

Thanks to the Covid-19 Lehigh County Relief Block Grant approval, we are able to order all the necessary Pantry set-up items needed for our operation i.e. tables, rolling storage cabinets, refrigerators and freezers, etc. These are coming within two weeks and then we need to organize the Pantry. Then we will bring in the food and toiletries the public has generously donated and pick up Second Harvest food to stock the Pantry. Then we need to bag up the items to hold our "Drop and Go" distribution. This is a step-by-step process and everything takes time.

To every one of the many volunteers who are getting all the required clearances -THANK YOU!! One clearance is the FBI Criminal Background Fingerprint Check. This gets done quickly and an unofficial copy of any criminal charges is emailed the next day. Unfortunately, we were told by staff at Identigo, where we need to have the fingerprints taken, that within two weeks the official copies would be mailed out. This piece of paper is all that is needed to complete that one clearance. Unfortunately, many volunteers are all waiting 6-8 weeks now with no official copy. Hopefully they come soon. I cannot open without full sets of clearances.

We told our guests on October 22nd at our last food distribution that we would let them know when we would open. At that time, we were hoping the beginning of December. I have received many, many phone calls asking when we will be opening since they are running low on food. I cannot do anything until we are open, but have talked with Doreen Wagner, who runs the Whitehall Food Pantry at St Stephen's Episcopal Church next to the High School. If you know anyone who needs food, please have them call Doreen at 484-246-5715 to get on her schedule until we can open. Thank you, Doreen.

Food Insecurity affects many Whitehall and Coplay residents. Some do not have transportation, some work two jobs (working poor) and cannot attend a pantry during the hours open, and some are unemployed due to Covid. I also have seniors, who live on fixed incomes, calling me too. They cannot stretch their dollars with their medications and are now concerned about how they will pay their real estate taxes in 2021. We will help as many people as we can when we open.

In the meantime, please look out for your neighbors, friends, and family members. Food Insecure people will not tell you they need help. Casually ask them how they are doing and if they need anything. Please share your abundance with those who are having a hard time right now.

We are collecting canned soup and vegetables, rice and pasta, spaghetti sauce, tuna fish, pancake mix and syrup, mac & cheese boxes, peanut butter, jelly, Jif-to-Go Packs, juice boxes, peanut butter or cheese snack crackers, pudding cups, toilet paper, baby and adult diapers, feminine products, shampoo, soap, toilet paper, and canned dog and cat food. These can be dropped at my Re/Max Unlimited office, 1080 Schadt Ave, Whitehall M-F 9-5, Sat 9-1 and Sun 10-1. Please call me with any questions 610-730-8067.

Have a great week!!

Shari Noctor

President

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