

Waukee pantry helps fill kitchen shelves

BY MARY STEGMEIR • MSTEGMEIR@DMREG.COM • OCTOBER 22, 2010

The project began five years ago and serves about 85 families a month, with many of them hit by the recession.



Joelle Krider never expected to need help feeding her family of five.

But after her husband, Jeff, lost his job installing flooring two years ago and she weathered a series of medical emergencies, the couple turned to the Waukee Area Christian Food Pantry for assistance.

"Everybody's taken a hit with this economy," said the Adel woman, whose husband now works part time. "But we're blessed to have a place like this to turn to. You feel welcome here, and they help you make it through the hard times."

The pantry is celebrating its fifth anniversary this month, and stories like the Kriders' are common among the food bank's clients, said director Melissa Stimple. The project started in 2005 as a collaborative effort among seven area churches to feed the hungry.

Over the past few years it has grown into an important resource for the residents hit by the recession, serving an average of 85 families a month.

"We see a lot of people living paycheck to paycheck," Stimple said. "It just takes one thing - a large medical bill, one major car repair, cuts to your hours at work - and people find that they need help."

The food pantry, located in the basement of Westview Church, 1155 S.E. Boone Drive, is staffed by 30 to 50 regular volunteers. Stimple, who works part time, is the only paid employee.

The organization purchases products from the Food Bank of Iowa and buys goods at a discounted rate at the Fareway store in Waukee. Church, civic and school groups also provide food, personal care items and fiscal donations.

"When we started this five years ago, people said: 'What? A food pantry in Waukee?' " said volunteer Don Perschau. "But we had people in the door the first month, and as word has spread we're getting more and more people."

The pantry distributes food two times a week to residents of the Waukee school district, as well as families from surrounding communities that are referred to the program by a supporting church. In the last five years, the program has expanded the social services offered at its Boone Drive location to include a free clinic, a discount meal purchasing program, and a community garden that provides fresh produce for the food bank's shelves.

Each month, roughly 10 new clients visit the pantry. Food is distributed based on family size, but clients can pick and choose which products they want to take home.

On Monday, Joelle Krider was excited to see canned pumpkin at the pantry. She selected two cans of the product and a can of evaporated milk, promising to bring pumpkin bars back later in the week for the volunteers to snack on.

"You guys have saved us more than once," Krider told pantry workers. "You're a blessing."

Waukee food panty

The Waukee Area Christian Food Pantry, 1115 S.E. Boone Drive, is open from 4 to 6 p.m. Mondays and from 9 to 11 a.m. on Thursdays. It serves residents of the Waukee school district, as well as families from surrounding communities who are referred to the program by a supporting church. Clients should bring proof of residence, such as a utility bill or apartment lease, and a photo ID. For more information, call 321-0894 or visit [www.waukee christianservices.org](http://www.waukeechristianservices.org).

TO DONATE:

Residents interested in donating to the Waukee Area Christian Food Pantry can drop off food or personal care items at Dahl's, 15500 Hickman Road, Clive; Fareway, 200 Laurel St., Waukee; Waukee City Hall, 230 Hickman Road; Waukee Police Department, 1300 L.A. Grant Parkway; or at any Waukee area church. Items most in demand are canned meals, canned tuna or chicken, canned fruit, boxed potatoes, Hamburger Helper, spaghetti sauce, pizza sauce, baby food, toothpaste, soap and diapers. For more information, or to learn how to volunteer at the pantry, call 321-0894 or visit www.waukee christianservices.org.



Volunteers check expiration dates and sort food Oct. 18 at the Waukee Area Christian Food Pantry located at Westview Church,

1155 SE Boone Drive, in Waukee. Pictured are Rose Etima, of Waukee, a volunteer for three years who belongs to St. Boniface Church. "I want to help my church," she said. Linda Terpstra, of Urbandale, center, has volunteered since the pantry opened five years ago. "It's a great way to help out," Terpstra said and Carter Watson, 17, of Waukee, who has volunteered for about three months



Volunteer Mike Thompson, of Waukee, stocks items on the "miscellaneous" shelf

at the Waukee Area Christian Food Pantry Oct. 19. He has been volunteering for one year. "I enjoy helping people," he said. The Waukee Area Christian Food Pantry is located at Westview Church, 1155 SE Boone Drive, in Waukee. According to the Waukee Christian Services website: applicants must live in the Waukee School District; no appointment is necessary; stop by during office hours: (Monday 4-6 pm & Thursday 9-11 am) and bring proof of residence (like a utility bill or apartment lease) and a photo ID. Services are

confidential and private. For more information call (515) 321-0894. Volunteers and donations are welcome.



Fresh produce is available at the Waukee Area Christian Food Pantry. A Waukee Area Christian Community Garden is located on the grounds of Westview Church with the produce going to the food pantry.



Volunteer Don Perschau assists Joelle and Jeff Krider of Adel as they shop for items at the Waukee Area Christian Food Pantry, located at Westview Church, 1155 SE Boone Drive, in Waukee. "You feel welcome here--they are awesome," Joelle said. Joelle and her husband have three children.



The Waukee Area Christian Food Pantry can always use donations including personal items such as toothpaste, body soap and diapers. For more of the food pantry's "most wanted" items to donate go to www.waukeechristianservices.org.



Brady Campbell, 17, of Waukee, volunteers at the Waukee Area Christian Food Pantry. He has volunteered for about a year and a half.



Jeff Krider of Adel shops for items at the Waukee Area Christian Food Pantry Oct. 18. Behind him is volunteer Don Perschau. Krider was there with his wife, Joelle. The couple have three children and have had health and job setbacks recently.