

Food for Thought

A newsletter of the Larchmont-Mamaroneck Hunger Task Force

May 2008

Celebration Planned as Food Pantry “Re-Opens” in Renovated Quarters One Year Later

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The Larchmont-Mamaroneck Hunger Task Force waited and watched as the flood-ravaged walls of its basement-level quarters came down and the new ones were built and decorated with bright, vibrant stripes of red and blue paint. In early May, the patience and flexibility of volunteers and clients was rewarded when the Food Pantry “re-opened” in its renovated space, more than one year after it was severely damaged in last April’s flood.

The renovation work began in February 2008. The entire basement level of the Community Action Program Center on 134 Center Street in Mamaroneck was stripped to the studs. The new layout includes a dedicated pantry storage room,



Another view of our beautiful new floor!

a meeting room, additional storage, and a large open meeting area for community use. The heating system has been replaced and new windows have been installed. The renovation also includes new stairs connecting the basement to the building’s first floor entryway, new sheetrock and paint, and bright, new linoleum tile floors.



Inside the newly renovated quarters of the Food Pantry.

Since last year’s flood, the Food Pantry had been operating out of a play shed in the CAP Center’s yard, which is ordinarily used by the Mamaroneck Child Development Center’s preschoolers, without any refrigeration or freezer storage for perishable food items. New equipment – including a refrigerator and freezer, stainless steel shelving, and storage bins -- purchased with the help of a grant from a local family foundation and The Food Bank for Westchester -- has been installed in the Food Pantry’s new storage room. The refrigerator and freezer will enable the Food Pantry to once again store perishable food rather than give it away after each distribution.

You are invited to come for an Open House on Sunday, June 1 from 3:30-5:00pm at the CAP Center to celebrate its “re-opening” and see the new Food Pantry quarters first hand. Invitations will be arriving in the mail shortly.

Food for Thought May 2008

Dear friends,

We have survived, even thrived, over the past 12 months, after having been displaced from our CAP quarters by last April's devastating flood. The year has been full of blessings and challenges: the blessings of more volunteers than ever, the flexibility of Mamaroneck Child Development Center Director Denise Gilman for food storage and distribution space, and the overwhelming generosity of our financial supporters in Larchmont and Mamaroneck. The challenges have included packing groceries and distributing bags outside in the heat of the summer; storing generous food drive donations in the auditorium of the Mamaroneck United Methodist Church and recruiting volunteers to move the food to the pantry as we could use it; and operating without a refrigerator or freezer as it meant that any perishable foods had to be carried away for other agencies' use at the end of each pantry distribution. We are proud to have survived and continued to offer vital support to our client families.

In comparing 2006 to 2007, we served 550 more families (1,900 more people) in 2007, about a 12% increase. The more important statistics are what we saw in looking at post-flood numbers: from May through December, a 25% increase in the number of people, including a 29% increase in the number of children.

In 2007, we served on average 230 families each distribution, with a record 300 families at Thanksgiving and 265 at Christmas. We began 2008 with a similar average, but in early spring we have experienced a dramatic increase to almost 260 families every two weeks. Several new families register each time we open. We are beginning to see the impact of rising food costs and a slowing economy on our clients.

Our 2008 budget is \$163,500, including \$137,000 for food and \$13,500 for expenses related to replacing capital items lost in the flood (freezer, fridge, shelving, tables, etc.). The balance covers other operating expenses.

Our communities were incredibly generous to us in raising flood relief funds. It is our Steering Committee's belief that our donors give with the expectation that we'll buy food, not create a huge savings account. To fulfill that responsibility,

***New items
in our bags
this year
include
meat once
a month
and some
great fresh
produce.***



we've added some wonderful foods to our bags: sliced cheese once/month, a frozen meat or chicken once/month, a second cereal to the bags for large families, and a jar of jelly once/month.

In addition to the cost of these new food items, our budget reflects a 10% increase in our cost of all food. Given the dramatic rise in our client numbers on top of increased food prices, this estimate may prove too conservative.

Our refurbished space in the basement of the CAP Center is bright, well-lit and spacious, and we are thrilled to move back in. Our new refrigerator and freezer has been purchased with grant money from The Food Bank for Westchester, and the vendor has them waiting for us in his warehouse. The refrigerator is especially important as the weather warms up, as it will ensure that we can continue to purchase eggs, which we had to give up last summer. Both appliances will allow us to store fresh foods from one distribution to the next, and not have to give them away.

We are ever grateful for your continued support, be it as a volunteer or a financial donor, or both! Your involvement and care about your neighbors make us as effective as we are. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carol Cauley
President
Larchmont-Mamaroneck Hunger Task Force

Wholesale Food Prices for Food Pantry Staples Have Risen Steeply

Since February, 2008, we have seen wholesale prices rise steeply for several Food Pantry mainstays. Here's a bit of what we're facing with our wholesale prices (from the Food Bank and a commercial wholesaler):

- Eggs are up 33%
- Peanut butter is up 18%
- Mac & cheese is up 23%
- Cereal is up 13%
- Dry milk is up 19%

The Food Pantry relies on local food drives to keep its costs down. **If you are planning any kind of food drive this year, these are the food items we use that have risen in cost the**

Food Pantry Numbers Up Significantly in Early Spring

In what may be a sign of the effects of rising prices and the slowing economy, the number of families served by the Food Pantry has risen significantly to 250 for each distribution since early Spring. This compares to an average of 230 per distribution for all of 2007. Several new families register each time we open.

Given the dramatic rise in our client numbers on top of increased food prices, last year's significant surplus may be spent in a much shorter time than planned. We are analyzing our first quarter food expenses to make whatever spending adjustments are necessary to ensure a healthy fiscal year.

Volunteers Share Their Enthusiasm for the "New" Space

Sarah Duffy Edwards, VP of Board, Volunteer Coordinator, volunteer Tues pm packing: *"Who would have believed something so good could emerge from a dire situation. Now, area residents have a more welcoming, accessible place to access CAP Center services."*

Wendy Brooks, founding Board member, volunteer Tues pm client desk: *"Wow! I'm really looking forward to serving those in need in this beautiful environment."*

Stephen Bartell, Steering Committee; long time volunteer, Tues/Wed am: *"It's great to be 'back home'! The volunteers impressed me with their flexibility and resilience, adjusting quickly to the 'shed'.. Thanks to the CAP Center for their great work on the 'new' space."*

In support of the work of the Food Pantry, enclosed is my check payable to the Hunger Task Force in the amount of:

\$50 _____ \$75 _____ \$100 _____ Other \$ _____

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____

I will ask my company to match my gift. I would like to learn about making a bequest.

I want to volunteer at the pantry. Please contact me at _____

P. O. Box 634 Mamaroneck, NY 10543

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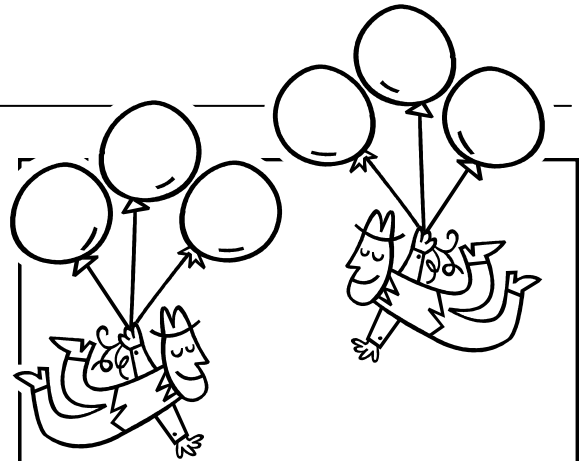
Summer Volunteers Needed

The Food Pantry distributes groceries at the CAP Center at 134 Center Avenue in Mamaroneck twice a month on Tuesday nights between 7:00 pm and 8:30 pm and on Wednesday mornings between 9:00 am and 11:00 am.

Volunteers are always needed! Join us on Tuesday mornings (9:15-10:30 am) to unload provisions from delivery trucks, late Tuesday afternoons (5:30-6:30) to pack groceries (a great volunteer opportunity for individuals, families and groups) or Wednesday mornings (9:00-11:00) to help carry groceries as clients are served. If you are interested in volunteering for any of these shifts or simply want to learn more about the pantry... **leave a message for us at 698-3558.** We return calls within a week.

2008 Distribution Schedule

May 13, 14	August 12, 13
May 27, 28	August 26, 27
June 10, 11	September 9, 10
June 24, 25	September 23, 24
July 8, 9	October 14, 15
July 22, 23	October 28, 29



Save the Date for an Open House to celebrate our "re-opening"!

The Food Pantry and the CAP Center invite you to visit us in our newly renovated basement quarters to celebrate our post-flood "re-opening"!

This is not a fundraiser, just a celebration!!

**Sunday, June 1
3:30-5:00pm**

134 Center Avenue, Mamaroneck

Watch for your invitation in the mail!

LARCHMONT·MAMARONECK

HUNGER TASK FORCE INC

Food Pantry for Neighbors in Need

P. O. Box 634
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