



NORTHSIDE
**FOOD
PANTRY**
ADVISORS

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Northside Food Pantry Advisors ensure sustainable health and food security for our neighbors by donating time, money, and goods.

2020 Annual Report

COVID-19

Like every organization, the Northside Food Pantry drastically changed pantry operations in early March 2020. Thanks to the thoughtful preparation spearheaded by Pantry Coordinator Jana Thompson, there was no interruption in service. Pantry operations shifted to a curbside system quickly, and with the help of a dedicated army of in-person and at-home volunteers, orders were fulfilled within one hour on pantry shopping days.

What did change was the supply chain: we soon noticed that our donated produce would not be available in the same volume we needed. We developed a relationship with Consumer's Produce in the Strip District, and because of the generosity of donors, we were able to afford the \$18,000 produce bill.

Buying from Consumer's Produce means that pantry families have been able to access the same quality produce that is available at supermarkets. The pantry has become a reliable resource to our neighbors for healthy, store-quality produce. Consistent availability allows families to plan, eat well, and improve their health in what was a stressful year for all of us. We are the only pantry in southwest PA that offers fresh produce on an unlimited, daily basis, with many of our neighbors returning two or three times a week for more fresh and frozen produce.

The Northside Food Pantry and Northside Food Pantry Advisors changed in other ways during the COVID pandemic: curtailing volunteer opportunities and no longer accepting donations of food. Our curbside system requires us to have quantity, which is why we used more than \$3,000 from our financial supporters to purchase nearly 2200 cans of chunky soup in the last quarter of 2020. Your financial donations allow us to wait until the soup is discounted and available in a very large quantity to accommodate our new distribution model.

While we remain hopeful that the pantry will be able to safely re-open at some point in 2021 for in-person shopping, we are most proud of being able to maintain choice throughout the pandemic. No matter the circumstance, pantry families were able to place orders for the items they wanted to receive.



2020 Service

2020 brought numerous service challenges on not only a monthly but also daily basis. From continually changing circumstances in the supply chain, to implementing improved safety systems, to construction outside the pantry doors, the Pantry Coordinator and volunteers continued to rise and conquer these and many more 2020 challenges, again and again.

The Pantry distributed 327 tons of food sourced from the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, with the heaviest hauls coming from meat and produce. Additionally, another 27 tons of fresh fruit and vegetables from Consumer's Produce gave a healthy supplement to the selection of food. In total, more than 350 tons of food was distributed in the 2020 calendar year.

Year of Greens

With limited exceptions, the Northside Food Pantry Advisors were able to purchase and offer customers unlimited access to frozen spinach throughout the year.

Our goal was to provide this leafy green vegetable, a known fighter against heart disease, to pantry families. The recent University of Pittsburgh, "Pittsburgh's Inequality Across Gender and Race" report outlined something the Northside Food Pantry Advisors had been seeing anecdotally: our in- need neighbors require consistent access to wholesome foods to lead healthy lives.

While COVID changed many things, it did not change access to the produce families were accustomed to seeing at the pantry, and we were grateful to be able to provide frozen spinach on a daily basis not only in 2020, but continuing forward into 2021.



2020:
Year
of
Greens



Bags!

If you are on our Northside Food Pantry Advisors email list, you have surely been notified about our need for bags. Our curbside ordering system requires stiffer bags to allow our fulfillment volunteers to more easily process orders, to permit the stacking of orders on our outdoor cart to put in customer trunks, and to provide an easier trip home for customers who travel on foot to the pantry.

We have easily exceeded 15,000 bags donated in 2020. While we cannot thank everyone who dropped off bags, we would like to note our organizational partners who provided volumes of bags at no cost to us:

AIDS Free Pittsburgh · DICK'S Sporting Goods · Dollar Bank via the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust · First National Bank · Giant Eagle · Girl Scout Troop 16388 · Highmark · Pittsburgh Penguins · Pittsburgh Steelers · UPMC · Walmart · WOWS (Women of the War Streets)

The need for bags is ongoing. If you have reusable cloth bags or the heavy plastic grocery bags (found at Aldi and Target delivery), please drop them off at Northside Common Ministries (1601 Brighton Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15212).

A special thank you to our partner, Giant Eagle, for also providing women's hygiene products. We are so grateful.

Volunteers

We would not have survived this year without the dedication of volunteers. We asked a considerable amount from them in the throes of a global health pandemic: a recurring weekly commitment during the day or ongoing availability in-person. This limited the number of people exposed to one another and provided reliability to the pantry to avoid multiple trainings. Volunteers: You have been the true heroes of our efforts in 2020! The people listed below volunteered their time in person or at home at some point during 2020:

Umar Ahmad, Eve Alden, Dominic Bananno, Sara Beck Sweeney, Pam Block, John Brucker, Christina Campbell, Leslie Carothers, Nicole Chaudet, Sharon Cowden, Brock Dezi, Ross Ducal, Annie Durani, Ella Engberg, Kathy Genovese, Charlie Gish, Brittany Goldinger, John Gore, Stephanie Grimm, Corey Grone, Kaveri Guduru, Linda Hagan, Jeff Hall, K.C. Hall, Todd Hall, Latisha Harris, Brian Hatgelakas, John Hayden, John Hickman, Melissa Hoey, Jocelyn Horner, Jon Hurwitz, Andrew Jenkins, Larry Jones, Tim Jones, Drew Jowers, Joe Kalinoski, Tom Little, Sophia Lucente, Philip Lyle, Kyle Mahaney, Monique McCain, Shawn McIntyre, Sarah Miller, Marissa Morrison, Geraldine Muyango, Aadarsh Nalluri, Mary Olexsak, Paul Outon, Renee Piechocki, Frank Pogue, Keith Pritchett, Marirose Radelet, Sheila Rankin, Cathy Rescher, Trevor Roper, Heather Sanders, Steven Schriver, Ben Sgroi, Hafash Shahzad, Bea Simon, Brenda Simpson, Bessie Snyder, Mike Sparlin, Jill Standley, Rosanne Stead, Mike Stefowski, Ralph Strickler, Aarav Surapaneni, Sharon Sweeney, Ronald Swope, Barbara Talerico, Bruce Thompson, Leif Torgerson, Faith Triplett, Andrea Truckley, Jackson Walker, Wesley Walker, Greg Weinstein, Sereny Welsby, Tanya Wendt, Elisabeth White, Alma Wisniewski, Findlay Zotter, & Lucia Zwicker-Jones.



Virtual Fundraisers

The Northside Food Pantry Advisors has benefitted from the annual commitment from neighborhood groups that are willing to spread awareness about our efforts. Friendsgiving, an annual event co-hosted by Paul & Jessica Carson and Nicole & Phil Bujakowski, went on virtually this year raising nearly \$10,000, four times what was raised in 2019. Other neighbors, like Michelle Lynch and Chris Rapiet, pulled together their own fundraisers. Peggi Habets, a friend of the pantry and neighbor, donated the proceeds of an art sale. Remarkably, neighbors and friends supported the pantry via virtual events in 2020 raising \$13,169.50 in total. We look forward to joining you in person in 2021.

About

The Northside Food Pantry Advisors serve as a "friend of" organization for the Northside Food Pantry, which allows flexibility with the immediate purchase of items in need. Our efforts are 100% volunteer and funds raised go towards the purchase of produce, dry goods, and household essentials, like toilet paper. Financial donations are fully tax-deductible.

The following individuals were members of the 2020 Northside Food Pantry Advisors Executive Committee: Moira Regan Edmiston, Linda Ehrlich, Kimberly Giles, Rachael Heisler, Collyn O'Donnell, Cheri Pogue, Darlene Rushing, and Jana Thompson.

Thank you to our 2020 Northside Food Pantry Advisors Donors

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Recurring Donors

Included in this list and noted by an asterisk are our 2020 recurring donors. By the end of 2020, we had 62 recurring monthly donors who were donating \$2,789.75 per month. In total, our recurring donor program raised \$26,351.10 in 2020. This program has seen considerable growth in 2020, adding nearly 20 new recurring donors and more than \$10,000 additional dollars over 2019. Our efforts would not be possible without our monthly donors, who are the backbone of our giving efforts and allow for stability in income from month to month. Thank you.