

Food Matters

A publication of Aurora Area Interfaith Food Pantry

Fall 2017



Paving the Way

We've all been there – circling a parking lot trying to find a parking space, growing more frustrated the longer you have to search. (And it always seems to happen at the worst times, like when you're in a rush or have antsy kids in the backseat.)

Each week, 950 families visit Aurora Food Pantry. While some take the bus or walk, the vast majority arrive in cars. Safely and efficiently moving that many cars through our parking lot is difficult on a good day; add in bad weather, runaway carts, or a dead car battery and the situation becomes even more challenging for the families as well as staff and volunteers.

Fortunately, our long-awaited parking lot expansion is underway. This project will double the number of parking spaces on site, allowing clients to access the parking lot more easily. Additionally,

a second driveway means cars will no longer enter and exit in the same space. This will greatly improve traffic flow and create a safer environment for clients, volunteers, and staff.

Lighting will also be added to the parking lot, a crucial first step in a long-term goal of Aurora Food Pantry: to provide an evening food distribution. More than half of our clients have at least one employed member in their household, making it difficult for them to get to the pantry during our usual hours. Evening distribution hours will also open up new volunteer opportunities for people who work during the day and are looking for an opportunity to give back.

This parking lot project is the culmination of years of work and fundraising. We are so grateful to everyone who made this possible!



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A Message from the Executive Director



The other day, we had a young woman visit the pantry for food. She kept nervously checking her watch as our volunteers and staff worked to get clients registered and into the market to shop. Her dilemma was one that parents will know well: she was worried that she would be late to pick up her child.

We all hate to be kept waiting, but it is difficult to imagine the stress that comes from having to wait for food. While the young woman was able to get her groceries in time, we remain committed to improving our distribution process. Our parking lot expansion will help us be more efficient and responsive to the needs of our clients.

For example, one of the pantry's major goals has been to add an evening distribution for working

families. The "wait" for that is nearly over as well. While the new parking lot is the first step towards providing an evening distribution, there are still many steps to go.

A big hurdle to an evening distribution will be securing enough volunteers. We're confident the "after work" hours will free up more people to give generously of their time. If you or your business, church group, or club are interested in learning more about volunteering, please email info@aurorafoodpantry.org or call 630-692-3059 and we'll keep you informed of volunteering opportunities. I hope to see you at the pantry soon!

Marilyn Weisner

October Feast

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

Prost! We're getting into the Octoberfest spirit with our very own OctoberFeast celebration at our Annual Gala on September 30. Held at Pipers Banquets in Aurora, the evening will feature a full open bar, a delicious German-themed dinner, and tastings provided by Hopvine Brewing Company and Aspen Lane Wine Company.

A highlight of the evening will be the silent and live auctions, which include fabulous vacations, sports tickets, one-of-a-kind experiences and

more. Information on auction items can be found by visiting aurorafoodpantry.org and clicking on the OctoberFeast link.

Tickets are \$100 per person and every \$1 raised at this event provides \$7 worth of food for hungry families in our community. We hope to raise a glass with YOU at the event! To purchase tickets, view auction items, or learn more about sponsorship opportunities, please visit aurorafoodpantry.org.

Don't miss OctoberFeast!

We have a new website!
www.aurorafoodpantry.org

Funding provided by
Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley



Donor Spotlight: Gerald Subaru

Gerald Subaru of Naperville-North Aurora has been a great partner of Aurora Food Pantry for many years now, providing support for the Holiday Food Drive and Matching Pallet program. During the 2016 holidays, owner Doug Gerald and Naperville general manager Alec McKean increased their support when they selected Aurora Food Pantry to be the local charity featured at the Naperville dealership during Subaru's national Share the Love campaign.

Share the Love brought in over \$48,000 for Aurora Food Pantry, including a \$10,000 donation from Gerald Subaru. Their generosity allowed Aurora Food Pantry to distribute more than \$340,000 worth of food to families in our community.

Alec McKean shared with us his thoughts on the importance of getting involved in the community and what it's like to see the pantry "in full swing."

1. How did Gerald Subaru get involved with Aurora Food Pantry?

When I was working in Bloomington, IL my employer, who is a friend of



Center front, holding check, from left: Alec McKean, General Manager, Doug Gerald, Owner, with Gerald Subaru and Aurora Food Pantry staff.

Dan Dolan's, ran a very successful food drive to benefit The Clare House Food Pantry. Dan hatched his plan for the Aurora Food Pantry Holiday Food Drive based upon what we had accomplished in Bloomington. When I relocated to Naperville, I reached out to Dan and asked how could I get involved with the Holiday Food Drive and the relationship began from there.

2. Why did Gerald Subaru choose to support a food pantry?

Food and nutrition is everyone's basic need. What I learned from working with food pantries over the years is that you can't predict when someone is going to need a helping hand. Providing food can help families and individuals avoid having to sacrifice other necessities such as medication, rent, or utilities.

3. What has been your favorite moment or memory working with Aurora Food Pantry?

I am always blown away by the generosity of the community during either the Matching Pallet program or the Holiday Food Drive.

4. Anything else you'd like to share?

Visiting the food pantry in full swing is an unbelievable experience. All the work the volunteers and staff do to make the visit to the pantry for the recipients easy and stress free is immense – from coordinating parking to helping folks choose the foods that will best suit them.

Thank you,
Gerald Subaru,
for your generosity
and support!



Giving Back to Our Veterans

Hunger can affect anyone, including our nation's veterans. According to the National Veterans Foundation, 1.5 million veterans live in poverty. To combat this situation, we've partnered with the Fox Valley Marine Corps League to increase outreach to veterans in our community. On November 10 (the day before Veterans Day) we will be offering a special food distribution for veterans at Aurora Food Pantry.

We encourage all veterans and their families to come and receive meat, produce and non-perishable foods, as well as get acquainted with the pantry and the services we offer. Food will be distributed from 12:00 – 2:00pm. Veterans are asked to bring a photo ID and bags. We are honored to serve those who so bravely served our country. For more information visit our website or call 630-897-2127.





Aurora Area Interfaith Food Pantry

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Pantry Location: 1110 Jericho Road, Aurora
Phone: 630-897-2127
Website: aurorafoodpantry.org
Email: info@aurorafoodpantry.org

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Save the Date!

OctoberFeast:

Saturday, September 30



Veterans Pantry:

Saturday, November 10

#GivingTuesday

Tuesday, November 28

Each week, 950 families who struggle with low wages, illness, unemployment, and more visit our pantry. In the past year, families received more than 47,000 grocery baskets full of nutritious food.

Thank you to Aurora Fastprint, Inc. for generously donating a portion of this newsletter.

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