

Did You Know...

serving locally >>>



Radishes, Rhubarb and Lettuce

This spring we asked community members to purchase an extra vegetable plant and bring the produce to the pantry. The program has proven to be an overwhelming success and we are able to provide fresh vegetables to those visiting the pantry. Donations will be accepted throughout the rest of the harvesting season.

Fresh produce donations accepted during normal business hours.



After careful consideration, our Board of Directors has decided to forgo a golf tournament this year. Thank you for your understanding and we look forward to golfing with you in June 2021.

follow us on Facebook

WCFP Board of Directors: Kristina Churchill, Harriet Waite, LeAnn Quist, JoEllen Maras, Mark Degner, Chris Jensen, Gregg Miller, Fred Otte, Scott Vanderschaaf, Kevin Willis, Mark Zannotto.
WCFP Strategic Director: Denise Ray

www.josephscoat.org



Looking for a service project for your company or organization? Contact us! We can help you organize a food drive or provide you ideas for a community service project.



Want to hear more about what we do? We will speak at your group meeting. We also give tours of the pantry (please call ahead to schedule the time).

did you realize?

We help complete

- SNAP Applications
- United Way Basic Needs Assessments

in this issue >>>

- Thrift Store Remodel
- Harvest for Hunger
- Ways to Donate
- By the Numbers



Summer 2020

www.josephscoat.org

the essentials

WCFP Responds to Coronavirus Impact

Commitment strong while serving on the front lines

Developing a plan to ensure the food pantry would stay open was the driving force behind our thinking during the pandemic.

Everyone felt the coronavirus impact. At a time when health and basic necessities were thrust to the forefront, I am proud to say the WCFP responded to the challenge of continually providing food for our neighbors and never had to close.

However, in mid-March we temporarily closed the thrift store portion of our organization. This was a difficult decision as Joseph's Coat is a vital part of our lifeline as all proceeds from sales go directly to fund the pantry.

As decisions had to be made quickly, the health and well-being of our employees was paramount. Employees were divided into two teams, working one week and then off a week. In the case that an employee was exposed to CV-19, their team would have been quarantined. By always having a team on reserve, our food pantry could remain open. Our employees adjusted to wearing protective gear, and we streamlined our paperwork process to maintain social distancing. Pantry patrons were met by employees at their vehicle and groceries were loaded into their cars. Food was delivered to those who were most vulnerable and we prepared quarantine boxes filled with 14 days of food for those who needed to self-quarantine.

The community need for the food pantry rose by 20% in March. We provided over 7,800 meals to 408 individuals. We also collected food for student lunches during the first week the schools were closed, distributing 1,980 pounds of food to 227 kids in just two hours. In total, we served 635 individuals over 9,700 meals in March.

We were fortunate to have begun a remodel project in early March with donated funds. By purchasing clearance shelving at a fraction of the cost of new, we were able to assemble the shelving and update our store during the time Joseph's Coat was closed. Our board of directors was proactive and kept our employees working by utilizing Payroll Protection funding.

Joseph's Coat reopened on May 26th. I want to thank our entire team who worked tirelessly to ensure the food pantry would remain open. During this unprecedented time, we are so grateful to be a part of your community. For the support we have received—whether it was food, monetary, lunches, or prayer—we thank you for bringing our mission to life.

—Denise Ray, WCFP Strategic Director



Patrons stayed in their cars and employees provided service in the alley behind the pantry during March, April and May.

"WCFP is perfectly poised to lead our community in the fight to end hunger. We are committed to doing everything in our power to ensure that no one has to go hungry. Your food pantry team is only one ingredient in the recipe that is needed to fuel our mission. We celebrate and give thanks to the hundreds who are joining us in our fight against hunger. We have been humbled by your generosity. Each gift, regardless of the amount, is critical to our ability to meet the growing and ever-demanding need."

-Kristina Churchill
WCFP Board President



1737 Washington Street
Blair, NE 68008
402.426.0440

thrift store remodel >>>

Joseph's Coat Reopens with New Look

Previously planned upgrades were completed while the store was closed due to the pandemic. An anonymous donor provided funds specifically for new shelving and display pieces.

"It's been in the works for a while," board Vice President Harriet Waite said. "It was a good time to get the checklist taken care of."

Employees were busy cleaning and assembling shelving during the closure. The building was painted and signage was updated as well.



"To me, it's almost like a boutique. When you walk through and look around, it just displays things so nicely and it's organized." -Board Vice President Harriet Waite



Bob Coffee presents the BACF grant to the WCFP.

Good Things Happen Here

WCFP received a \$4000 grant from the Alliance for the Future of Agriculture in Nebraska (AFAN) to use towards the purchase of an additional freezer for the pantry.

The Blair Area Community Foundation awarded the pantry a \$5000 grant for purchase of food due to COVID-19. Thank you!



New three door freezer in the pantry.

anniversary celebration >>>



The Washington County Food Pantry began serving the community through the oversight of the Washington County Ministerial Association. Local congregations initially supported the mission, but it soon became evident that requests for assistance outpaced the ability of congregations and individual donors to meet the ever-increasing needs of those in Washington County.

Inspired by the vision of Fr. Lyle Martin, several civic-minded leaders in the 1990's formed a committee to explore the idea of a thrift store to support the needs of the community. A Board of Directors was chosen and in 2003 Joseph's Coat thrift store opened for business in a rented space on the main street of downtown Blair. The Washington County Food Pantry was relocated to the rear of the thrift store and integrated under the supervision of Joseph's Coat. A year later, the pantry and thrift store moved to the current location at 1737 Washington Street.

We will be celebrating our 20 years of service to the county this fall. Thank you for your support the past two decades!

Watch for our open house celebration coming this fall



Thank you for supporting the Washington County Food Pantry!

how to donate >>>

We are a 501(c)(3) organization. All gifts are tax deductible.

- 1 **Joseph's Coat**—please give gently used clothing, toys, household items and small furniture and appliances.
- 2 **Direct Your Dollars**—bring us your receipts from Family Fare. For every \$150,000 of receipts, Family Fare donates \$1,000 to the WCFP.
- 3 The **AmazonSmile Foundation** will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your AmazonSmile purchases.
- 4 **PayPal**-donations are accepted online at www.josephscoat.org/support.
- 5 **Monetary Donations** are always accepted in person or by mail.

Washington County Food Pantry
1737 Washington Street, Blair, NE 68008



By the Numbers

In an average month we serve

- 149 FAMILIES
- 343 INDIVIDUALS
- 7,329 MEALS

We help 12 new families each month

In 2019 we distributed 212,655 pounds of food to families, seniors and children struggling with hunger in our community.

\$20 provides dinner for a family for 1 week

Most commonly needed food items: Jelly, syrup, peanut butter, canned meats, yogurt, tuna, potatoes, canned vegetables, cereal, oatmeal, and toilet paper.