

THE FOOD PANTRY

A Story from the Holy Spirit St. Vincent dePaul Society

Those of us who go to the homes to deliver food and financial assistance on Friday or Saturday mornings gather on Thursday evenings to pray together, share our stories, renew our commitment and get our assignments for the next week. Here is one of those stories shared.

We arrived at the street address on our sheet, but instead of it being a single family dwelling there were several doors to different apartments. Three young boys were playing outside, so we asked if they knew where “Jane Doe” lived. “That’s us! What’s in the bag?” We told him we were bringing groceries. The 7 year old ran to open his door, and called excitedly, “Mama! They brought FOOD! It’s FOOD, Mama! We’ve got FOOD!!” It is moments like that that keep us going, keep us knowing that we have been greatly blessed and it is our privilege to give assistance to others.

Our food pantry is stocked with donations from the yearly food drive for Thanksgiving/Christmas, those parishioners who leave their donations in the food basket throughout the year, and food collections by Holy Spirit School, JPII Catholic High School, Holy Spirit Boy Scout troop, and Holy Spirit American Heritage Girls. Thanks to all of our generous benefactors!

In FY 2018 we took food to 110 families at Thanksgiving and 110 families at Christmas. Through the rest of the year we gave food to 660 families, some through the church office and some during home visits. Members spent over 2000 hours maintaining the pantry and making home visits delivering food. It is estimated that the canned and boxed goods provided to the pantry were worth over \$45,300. In addition, the Society spent \$1784 for Thanksgiving perishables including turkeys, \$698 for Christmas perishables, and \$1500 for meat, eggs, and bread to take with home deliveries throughout the year. When we give food, the benefit is short lived, but we have seen with our own eyes how important it is. We have visited in homes with empty cabinets and empty refrigerators. We have seen the delight of those receiving a ham and all the ingredients for a traditional Christmas dinner. The food we give will last for a week, but we and they have encountered God’s love in the process.