

# Black Rock Food Pantry Newsletter

## Spring 2009 Edition

“Because no one should go to bed hungry!”



### Contributions

Contributions gladly accepted. 100% of your contributions go toward the purchase of food for our clients. Volunteers manage the operation, do the shopping, stock the shelves, and assist our clients as they select the items they need and want from the Pantry.

From: Gery Habansky, President

Dear Friends of the Food Pantry:

The idea for the Pantry, which started at a small gathering on Candlewood Lake, has developed and grown rapidly. This is, undoubtedly, partly due to the very difficult times we are experiencing.

But this is not the only reason. Equally important is the incredible response of our volunteers who have joined us in this ministry. I am overwhelmed by your creativity and commitment.

I want to thank Reverend Jones not only for his trust and generosity in donating his space to us but also for his constant reminder that we are living God's word.

I also want to thank the people who come to the Pantry and offer us the privilege of serving them.

We have taken on a great responsibility to help feed those who cannot provide for themselves. I'm proud to be part of this ministry with you.

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[www.blackrockfoodpantry.com](http://www.blackrockfoodpantry.com)

Visit our website for more information. Write your check in any amount that you can afford because your donation will help to feed individuals or families. Mail your check to Black Rock Food Pantry, 25 Princeton Street, Bridgeport CT 06605

### “Emergency Food Assistance”

There is a form to complete to qualify for food assistance. This form is a self-declaratory form that once completed entitles the bearer to what food the Pantry has to offer. Quantity and choice varies from week to week. An individual or head of household qualifies in two ways: income or participation in any one of at least ten programs. They are Food Stamps, Emergency Assistance, WIC, School Meals, Husky Part A, Part B, State Administered General Assistance, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Aid to the Blind or Disabled, Social Security Supplemental, or Section 8 Rental Assistance Program.

Gross income is the qualifier for each household size. For a household of one or more the qualifying yearly gross income is 22,490 at the bottom end of the qualifying wage scale and a gross income of 83,778 for household of 8. The incremental difference between a household of one or eight is \$7,661.00 per additional household member.



The Reverend Elder Clifton Jones shown in the snapshot above is largely responsible for making the dream of a food pantry in Black Rock come true. While others could not see their way clear to make space available on their premises, Reverend Jones saw the merit of a sponsorship. It fulfilled his dream to have a food pantry in his Church’s thrift shop located on the corner of Fairfield Avenue and Princeton Street. Pastor Jones is an affable man with 30 years of experience in the ministry. He recognized that a pantry is a need that had to be made viable. “Just don’t fail,” he said. Bless him.

### **The Black Rock Food Pantry**

The timing could not be better, and the timing could not be worse.

It is early April in 2009. Due to the global economy that exists today, the entire world finds itself in the midst of economic chaos. It is most severe right here in the USA.

Unemployment rates are soaring. Major companies, once thought of as the bulwarks of America, are seeking federal assistance or, worse yet, on the verge of collapse. Amidst all of this, the poor are only getting poorer, and their ranks are growing way too quickly.

We live in what many consider to be the wealthiest state in the union; we do have the highest per capita income, but we are not immune from the effects of the overall economy. Many of our neighbors are suffering in spite of the abundance of affluence around us. The largest cities in our state feel it the most given their relatively higher proportions of lower income and no income people.

It is incumbent on those with the talent, the means, the desire and the overall ability to do so to provide assistance to those who are most in need. Nothing is more basic than helping the poor by providing them with food.

The idea for the Black Rock Food Pantry emerged in a twenty-five year old Bible study group comprised of individuals in Connecticut's largest urban area, Bridgeport. While studying discipleship, it became apparent that it would be much better to put our studies into

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action. What better way to do so than to help feed those who could use assistance during these troubled economic times?

Black Rock is the southwest section of Bridgeport with a long history dating back to before the Revolutionary War. Once a town unto itself, it continues to have a strong sense of neighborhood and camaraderie that is difficult to match. Its residents are proud to announce: "Once a 'Rocker' – always a 'Rocker'". Although considered one of the more affluent areas of Bridgeport, it is not, however, without its share of those in need.

The Black Rock Food Pantry was in the planning stages over a year and a half. It has become a reality thanks to the dedication and efforts of religious and community leaders who have teamed together to assist the Black Rock Bible Study Group in its mission to help the disadvantaged in its own neighborhood.

Much has been written of late that charitable organizations of all kinds have suffered from declining donations. Food pantries are not immune to this condition either, and they have also been struggling to get enough food to assist the increased numbers of people relying on them for assistance. Nationally, food banks have about half as much food on their shelves as they did a year ago.

Our timing could not be better, and our timing could not be worse.

*By W. Melle Orendorf, Treasurer*

## Food Bank Anchors Pantry

Twice a week a small group of volunteers show up at the Food Bank in Fairfield to shop, as it were, for items that will fill the shelves.

The Food Bank warehouse holds the foodstuff available to Pantry shoppers. The amount of any one product that a shopper can take depends on the organization's function and size.

Today's shopping experience was guided by a need to fill up the empty spaces on many pantry shelves. Much is free. Some items are available at low cost.

The three shoppers found ice cream in the walk-in freezer; in the cooler, they found packages of salad greens and tomatoes; they picked up more bread to fill-up the bread shelf; they also found boxes of croutons and cookies and pretzels to line the shelves back at the pantry. The next day they picked up meat and onions, and cucumbers.

Shopping for the Pantry is in itself a rewarding experience. One can easily get excited, much like a kid discovering a lost toy.

At the Pantry, the crew unloads the cases of food brought back for clients to select from on Saturday morning.

Were it not for the businesses and citizens who donate cash and food to the Connecticut Food Bank and the generous people at the retail stores who donate the different food products, the Black Rock Food Pantry would be a different kind of Pantry.

Our hungry clients are very thankful for the many friends of the Pantry who remain nameless and who donate so generously.

And, of course, we cannot forget the teachers, the boys and girls, individuals of all kinds who have food bins in their businesses or who run food drives to collect non-perishables for the Pantry. We also thank the housewives who bring in shopping bags full of food they have purchased and collected.



## BRFP **SPRING NEWS**

: “Black Rock Online Community” @[www.blackrockonline.org](http://www.blackrockonline.org)

### [Black Rock Food Pantry Needs Help](#)

March 14, 2009 by [admin](#) [comment](#)

After reading the appeal I made to the City of Bridgeport last week in the city council chambers, please consider visiting our website [[www.BlackRockFoodPantry.com](http://www.BlackRockFoodPantry.com)] and making a small donation if you can:

We are here tonight to ask for much needed funds so that we may deliver to Bridgeport residents in need a most basic commodity, food. Prior to opening the food pantry we had made an appeal to our friends and family for funding, and they responded well. We received just over \$10,000.00 in 2008. Since January of this year private contributions have come to a trickle. Our spending for food From over the last eight weeks has been outweighed by our income by more than two to one. At the same time the number of Bridgeport family's that depend on our service has increased with every month. Going into this we had a goal of 500 meals each week. Which we would have been very proud of. Today just five months later we are nearing 1500 meals per week as calculated by the Council of Churches of Greater Bridgeport.

We believe that the numbers of meals served by the BRFP can easily double within the next few months as the word of our service continues to spread amongst needy families. The combination of dwindling funds received and the increased demand for food creates a condition that has us all concerned and even more determined. These are difficult times for many city residents. We know the help families receive at the Pantry is greatly appreciated. We constantly hear words of thanks. We know we are making a difference in the lives of so many. The money our clients save on their food bill is allowing them to more easily pay for utilities and rent. The BRFP has a strong team of dedicated individuals that volunteer their time at the Pantry--buying food, stocking shelves, and serving Bridgeport families in need with dignity.

From all of us at the BRFP and from the people we serve we thank you for your kind consideration. Please forward this e-mail. Thank you for your help. Bill Pelletier

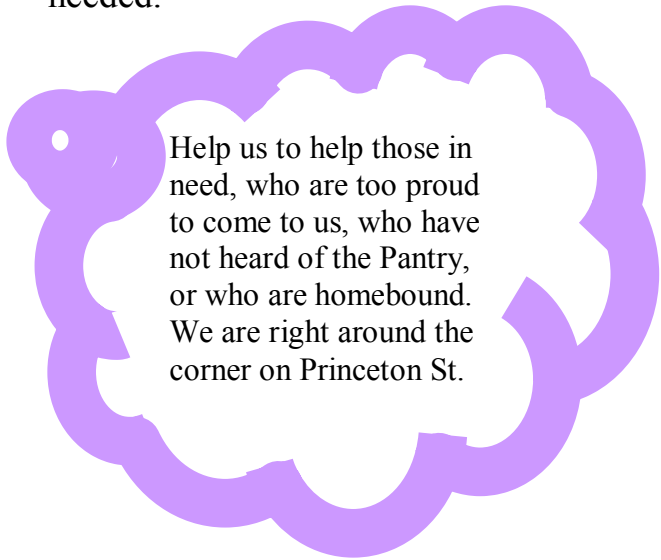
## HUNGER HIDES IN PLAIN SIGHT

The pantry exists to provide nutritious food for individuals and families who need it. Since shopping at the Pantry is only available once a month to any client in need, what an individual or family can pick up to serve as meals or snacks cannot last for a whole month. Although the Pantry is open every Saturday of the month, we look forward to being open more often. As it is, the number of clients [families] served just keeps rapidly growing.

When families have little or no money to buy groceries or the ingredients for a meal, things can get very tight. Few ever imagined themselves in the position of such need barely two or three months ago.

We recall a lady from Black Rock who had always been a generous soul. In later years, after her husband died, she had to make do with the little she had at the time. We also remember stories of another time when a downturn in the economy forced some seniors to eat so very little—going so far as to share what their cats ate.

So, if any of you know of someone who could benefit from the help the Pantry can provide, let us know. We are not Meals on Wheels, but we can put a few bags of groceries together and deliver as needed.



Help us to help those in need, who are too proud to come to us, who have not heard of the Pantry, or who are homebound. We are right around the corner on Princeton St.

## What Our Neighbors Could Use the Next Time You Go to The Market or Sponsor a Food Drive

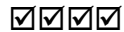
Products that are not always available at the Food Bank are cereal, flour, catsup, peanut butter, and sugar. So, whenever at your favorite market pick up an item.

WEEK 1: CEREAL. WEEK 2: FLOUR. WEEK 3: PEANUT BUTTER. WEEK FOUR: CATSUP, MUSTARD OR MAYO. The BRFB continues to accept all donations. Leave your donations at the Thrift Shop, corner of Princeton Street and Fairfield Avenue.

**Can you help? [Barbara Kiernan]**

The Pantry has a need for some office and other supplies, and we would be grateful if you could look in your desk or home office and donate any of the following that you are not using:

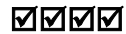
- 4"x6" index cards
- Sheets of address labels for inkjet printer (1"x3")
- Name tags
- Canvas tote and/or grocery bags
- Sturdy folding table (3 ft. by 5 ft.)
- Two-drawer, under-desk file cabinet
- Letter-size Pendaflex file folders – wide bottom preferred (just 5 will do)



**Simple acts of goodness [Barbara Kiernan]**

Among the many Black Rock residents helping to support the Food Pantry is a kind senior citizen who lives on Rowsley Street. She is not able to come herself, so she arranges to have a neighbor bring over a bag of food every few weeks. One week it might be peanut butter, jelly, and a few boxes of cereal. Another week it's soup ... or rice and beans ... or pasta and sauce.

These donations have touched the hearts of our volunteers, who draw inspiration from the thoughtfulness and fidelity that such simple generosity inspires.



To support the Black Rock Food Pantry and to express my appreciation for all that we have, I am happy to donate \$\_\_\_\_\_. BRFP will send an acknowledgement for the amount of your gift. All gifts are tax deductible. Mail your check to Black Rock Food Pantry, 25 Princeton Street, Bridgeport, CT 06605. [www.blackrockfoodpantry.com]

**BRFP SPRING NEWSLETTER: @THE FOOD BANK 4/8/09**

08:45 a.m.

The shopping team arrived for its 8:30 appointment at the Food Bank, and members of the team waited as other shopping teams pushed their carts from the shopping floor out into the vestibule where Richard, the Food Bank Manager, joins them to take an account from which to prepare an invoice for the organization checking out. It takes our team of four just fifteen minutes to load up two carts with available products.

While many products are free to qualified organizations, some are available by the pound for a small handling fee.



Richard prepares invoice while Gery watches.



Tom places a box of frozen and packaged beef cuts on the scales to be weighed.

Some shopping days are better than others. The team goes to the Food Bank twice a week: Nine on Wednesday and eight-thirty on Thursday. Below, Tom and Bill, back to camera, load up.



Tom carries box to scale to be weighed.



9:00 a.m. and on to the Food Pantry.