

MISSION

Loaves & Fishes exists as a mission of love and faith by providing food and temporary support services to residents of Ayer, Devens, Groton, Harvard, Littleton and Shirley and advocates for changes by its clients that will promote independence and self-reliance.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Cynthia Thomas, *President*
Kathleen O'Connor, *Vice President*
Doug Lee, *Treasurer*
Lauren Farrell, Aaron Gesin, Joel Gradwohl, Jon Panek, Deb Pappas, Leslie Row

STAFF

Patricia Stern, *Executive Director*
Paul Niemira, *Food Coordinator*
Theresa Wilson, *Client Advocate*
Gail Wilson, *Volunteer & Office Manager*

OPEN PANTRY HOURS

Wednesdays and Fridays
9:45AM – 12:30PM *Doors open at 9:30AM*
First and third Saturdays of month
9:00AM – 11:00AM *Doors open at 8:45AM*
Second Tuesday of month
6PM – 8PM *Doors open at 5:45PM*
Closed when Ayer-Shirley Regional School District is closed or delayed due to inclement weather.

FOOD DONATION TIMES

All Open Pantry Hours and Mondays and Wednesdays
7PM – 8PM

CLOTHING DONATION TIMES

Mondays 10AM – 12NOON and 7PM – 8PM

LOCATION

234 Barnum Road
Devens, MA
Mailing address: P.O. Box 1,
Ayer, MA 01432
Phone: 978-772-4627
Fax: 978-772-7395
www.loavesfishespantry.org

Over 29 years of service to the communities of Ayer, Devens, Groton, Harvard, Littleton and Shirley

JOIN THE 28th ANNUAL GOOD FRIDAY WALK – AND BRING A FRIEND!

The 28th Annual Good Friday Walk will be held on April 6, 2012. The money raised by this non-denominational walk benefits two important charities: Loaves & Fishes and Sharing, Inc., which helps impoverished youth in the rural South. We need your help—either as a walker, a volunteer, or a sponsor. The more money we raise, the more you help others. Each dollar that Loaves & Fishes receives buys 5 POUNDS of food!

The Good Friday Walk leaves the Harvard Congregational Church, located on the common, and proceeds around a scenic 5-mile loop including spectacular views (and a rest stop) at Fruitlands Museum. Walkers can register any time from 7:30AM until 12:30PM and can walk as far as they like, as long as they finish by 5PM. It's amazing that with relatively little physical effort, you can make a real difference in people's lives: helping them overcome hunger and poverty. Last year, we had about 170 walkers and about 60 volunteer workers who raised a total of just over \$17,000—a 20% decrease from 2010. We're hoping to do much



better this year—and with your help, we can!

Form a team multiplying the efforts to raise money—teams from work, church, your civic group, your family, your friends, your neighbors. If you're a teacher or church group leader, do you have students who are willing to walk and raise money, or to help in the kitchen or at the registration table? This Walk definitely qualifies for community service time! Everyone who raises \$100 or more will receive a free Good Friday Walk t-shirt while supplies last. We're asking people to "Give 'Til It Helps." If you are not walking, become a sponsor for someone who is. If you can walk, bring a friend! Eighty percent of the money raised will go directly to Loaves & Fishes' clients, our neighbors from Harvard, Groton, Shirley, Ayer, Littleton and Devens and will be spent on food and personal care items for those in need, while 20% will continue to go to Sharing, Inc., an organization which helps the poor in the rural South.

What do you need to do? If you're walking, pick up a sponsor sheet today at your local church or library, or download it at www.loavesfishespantry.org. Then, gather as many pledges or contributions as possible. We are asking walkers to raise a minimum of \$25 to participate. On the day of the Walk, total your sponsor sheet and bring it to the Registration Desk at the Harvard Congregational Church to receive a Walker number and map. No one under the age of 18 can walk without a parent or guardian's signature; walkers under age 12 must have adult supervision. Sorry, no bicycles, roller blades, scooters or skateboards are permitted. If you can spend a couple of hours volunteering in the kitchen or at the registration desk, contact either Jeanie Colony (978-456-1239, jecolony@charter.net) or Becca Day-Newsham (978-456-8717, newsha@aol.com).

The Good Friday Walk is the biggest on-going fundraising event for Loaves & Fishes—and in these hard economic times, it's critical to the pantry that the walk be successful. Thirty percent of our total client population consists of children under the age of 18 and seniors over 65. The people we serve are our neighbors and they need your help. This is a fun, healthy and rewarding way to make a contribution to your community.



Visit us on Facebook by scanning the code with your smart phone's Quick Response (QR) code reader, or by logging into Facebook and searching for "Loaves-Fishes-Pantry-in-Devens-MA"



Are you struggling to make ends meet? We can help... please see page 2.

Struggling to make ends meet?

Has someone in your household lost their job or had their hours cut? Are you choosing between heating your home, buying medications, or feeding yourself and your family? Do you need a little temporary help?

Come to an open pantry session!

- Every Wednesday & Friday
9:45 am-12:30 pm (doors open at 9:30am)
- First & third Saturday 9:00 am-11 am (doors open at 8:45 am)
- Second Tuesday of the month
6-8 pm (doors open at 5:45 pm)

Bring a recent utility bill as a proof of residency

Shop at the pantry twice a month for food and clothing

You may qualify to receive school backpacks and supplies for your children, holiday gifts, as well as scholarships for summer camp/enrichment activities which are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis depending on available funding.

Call our Client Advocate if you have any questions at (978) 772-4627 x312

Please come and visit—we want to help you!

I want to thank the people of Loaves & Fishes for all their help not only for the food pantry but for their support. My husband was diagnosed with lung cancer in May. During his battle with chemo and radiation Loaves & Fishes was able to help with easy to swallow foods whereas his esophagus was being affected. He was in remission for 5 months and then the cancer came back and took him within 2 weeks. The people here were my support system through it all. When I needed to talk they were there. God bless you all at Loaves & Fishes, you're special in our hearts.
Cindy



LOAVES & FISHES HAS WHEELS!

Great News! A Mobile Pantry was launched last month in Shirley! Thanks to the efforts of many volunteers, we are now able to provide food to housebound seniors and disabled residents of Shirley who are unable to shop at our Pantry. To be eligible for this new program, you must be sponsored by a community leader and provide basic information to L&F in order to receive a food delivery twice each month. Currently, we are serving nine individuals in this innovative program. We are very grateful to Ann Towne, Patty MacDonald and Frank Esielionis, from the Shirley Community Assistance Collaboration group, for being the driving force behind this effort and securing financial support. We hope to explore the possibility of expanding the Mobile Pantry to other communities within our service area during the coming year. To learn more about this program, please contact us at (978)772-4627 x310 or send an email to director@loavesfishespantry.org.

Help Us Fight Hunger

In the past year:

- 876 families, or 2,236 individuals, were assisted by the pantry
- Our client population has increased by 20%
- Approximately 8,000 lbs. of food was distributed to area families each week

We have never had to turn away anyone in need, but we need your help to continue our efforts to feed our neighbors. Organizing a food drive can be a fun and rewarding way to help your neighbors in need.

Businesses

The summer is historically a time when our inventory diminishes and there are fewer choices on our shelves. Consider our "Adopt a Week" program. Join other area businesses in sponsoring a Food Drive for only one week. We can help you plan and launch the drive focused on a summertime theme.

Schools

Helping our children understand the importance of community service is critical. Let us help you develop a food or clothing drive event sure to put smiles on their faces and help our neighbors at the same time.

Civic Groups

Consider collecting food for the pantry as admission to your events. It's a great way to partner with L&F and help the community.

Houses of Worship

Ask your congregation to participate in item-specific drives. When everyone contributes, the impact can be monumental.

Send an email to drives@loavesfishespantry.org to learn more about organizing a food drive.



We are grateful for the many bags of food which are delivered to the Pantry each day.

HELP US STAMP OUT HUNGER 20th Annual Postal Workers' Food Drive

Last year, thanks to the efforts of area U.S. Postal Service workers and over 60 volunteers, approximately 13,400 lbs. of food was collected during the Annual Postal Workers' Food Drive. Hardworking volunteers transported, off-loaded, date checked, sorted and stocked thousands of cans, boxes and packages of food destined to help area families in need. We are very grateful to the U.S. Postal Service for sponsoring this event, now in its 20th year.

On May 12th we will again be participating in this nationwide effort which represents the largest and most critical food drive for Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry. These donations will allow us to continue to feed area families throughout the summer months—a time when donations historically decrease and need increases.

Please consider contributing what you can— every item helps us help our neighbors. It's easy to do, simply leave your donations by your mailbox or bring them to your local post office. A team of volunteers will do the rest. If you have some spare time on the 12th of May, we could use your help at the pantry. Please call us at (978)772-4627 x300 or send us an email at tohelp@loavesfishespantry.org to learn more about how you can help.



Please remember us while you sort through and organize your closets this Spring as we are now accepting gently worn Spring clothing.

Donations are accepted each Monday morning from 10:00–12:00. If you'd like to help our Clothing Room Team sort and display items, please give us a call.

978-772-4627x300
tohelploavesfishes
pantry.org

SPECIAL THANKS

Loaves & Fishes has received enormous support from individuals, companies and organizations both within and outside of the communities we serve. We can't acknowledge everyone, but we will try to recognize as many donors as we can in this and future newsletters. Here are some friends in our communities who made their neighbors' lives a lot easier:

Harvard Unitarian Universalist Glean Team for providing many volunteer hours to transport food to the Pantry.

Food drives from **North Middlesex Savings Bank-Ayer, Community Chiropractic-Groton, Marriot Springhill Suites-Devens, Groton Worman's Club, Littleton Brownie Troop 63102 and Harvard Girl Scout Troop 30743.**

ISS-Shirley, for donating printing & design services.

Girl Scout Troop 62024 for 55 boxes of cookies.

Donelan's, Roche Bros., Target, Trader Joe's and Walmart for their ongoing food donations.

Cisco Matching Gift Program & Cisco employees for many volunteer hours and financial support.

Littleton Sunny Delight for placing a food donation box at their location.

Financial support from:
Timothy Ingraham
TOSA Foundation
Rollstone Bank & Trust
Bemis Associates employees
Laurence & Melissa Yahia
Richard & Jean Walsh
Warren & Meredith Kundert



Our dedicated volunteers hard at work.

EVERY NICKEL HELPS!

In June 2011, over \$1,000 was raised by the efforts of 20 volunteers who dedicated 44 hours to sorting and bagging bottles and cans at the Littleton Transfer Station. Can you help us do it again this year? We need volunteers to work a two-hour shift during normal Transfer Station hours (noon-7 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. on Saturdays) throughout the month of June. The cans, plastic and glass bottles all need to be sorted and packed into bags or boxes. Some lifting is required, and volunteers under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. For more information or to sign up for a shift, please contact Judy or Ray Grande at 978-486-1090, or e-mail judygrande@comcast.net.

If you wish to donate your 5 cent deposit bottles and cans, you do not have to be a Littleton resident—just bring them to the collection area at the Littleton Transfer Station, Spectacle Pond Road, during the Transfer Station hours noted above.

CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS!

National Volunteer Week begins April 15th!

HAVE A HEART! VOLUNTEER

Have a heart? Loaves & Fishes was founded on the principles of neighbors helping neighbors. Here at Loaves & Fishes the expression “many hands make light work” couldn’t have more significance. Fifty-two weeks a year volunteers work tirelessly to care for the needs of families in our community.

At each pantry session (eleven each month) we have an average of 25-30 volunteers who work directly with clients, answer phones, assist in our clothing room and receive and process donations. On Monday and Wednesday evenings, volunteers check expiration dates and sort donations of food. On a weekly basis, volunteers pick up food donations in each of the six towns we serve and beyond. Our food donation boxes are located at post offices, grocery stores, and various businesses. Volunteers also pick up donated food from BJ's, Donelan's, Hannaford, Roche Brothers, Target, Trader Joe's, and Wal-Mart. Volunteers also assist us with our newsletter by editing and writing articles, participating on committees, performing data entry, and all work diligently to spread the word that we are here to help!

We are strong and determined because of the hundreds of volunteers who share their time and their hearts to ensure that the work in all its forms gets done! If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Gail Wilson at (978)772-4627 x 300 or at tohelp@loavesfishes-pantry.org. New volunteer orientations are held every month on the first and third Wednesday night at 6:30 p.m. at the pantry.



Our volunteers are the best! They give their time and their hearts and always wear a smile.



Interested in sponsoring a food or clothing drive? Please contact us at drives@loavesfishes-pantry.org



Our sincere thanks to all of our volunteers (over 350 of them) – you are the heart of Loaves & Fishes

PLAYING IN THE DIRT

Do you like to get your hands dirty? Do you enjoy the fresh air and sunshine?

We have some ideas for you!!!



If you like gardening, how about mentoring a family on the finer points of planting, weeding and harvesting? We're proud to announce a new partnership with Growing Places www.growingplaces.org in Clinton and Longley Acres www.shirley-ma.gov/conservation/garden/gardenflyer2011.html in Shirley. We have identified three families who visit L&F regularly who would like to learn to garden and become more self-sufficient. Longley Acres has offered the land, and Growing Places has offered the expertise and materials to build a raised garden bed for each family. Now we need to find some volunteers willing to help our families learn the basics of gardening. It's a wonderful opportunity to help make a difference doing something you enjoy. Financial support would also be appreciated so that we can purchase seeds, seedlings, and tools.



Our Glean Team could use your help too! This nature-loving group visits area farms and orchards to glean produce for the Pantry. There's no set schedule...we'll contact you when an opportunity for picking presents itself. If you're available, great! If not, we'll catch you another time. We are thrilled to be able to offer fresh produce to our clients, and they are thrilled to receive it!



The Littleton Garden at Church Meadows may be a good fit for you. Volunteers are needed to help plant, weed and harvest from this bountiful garden that grows vegetables for Loaves & Fishes. It's an incredible effort which has produced approximately 10,000 lbs. of fresh vegetables during the past four years. It might be a great way to unwind after a busy day at work.



Perhaps you'd be interested in becoming one of our drivers who travel to Gaining Grounds www.gainingground.org in Concord throughout the growing season to pick-up the produce they grow for L&F. It's an amazing place, with seven acres of fruits, vegetables and flowers, all run by volunteers and supported by grants and donations.



Maybe you'll consider planting a row for us in your own family garden and sharing some of your abundance. What a wonderful family activity that teaches the children about the importance of giving!

If you are interested in learning more about any of these programs, please contact us at (978)772-4627 x300 or by email at tohelp@loavesfishespantry.org. Get your hands dirty and help us help our neighbors. Together we can make a difference!

BACKPACK PROGRAM

Remember the back-to-school shopping excitement of picking out a new backpack and fresh school supplies? Choosing just the right backpack and the essential crayons, pencils, markers and notebooks is a much anticipated event in most families. Unfortunately, many of our youngest clients never experience that particular excitement and joy.

At L&F we try to normalize life for the children, and our Backpack Program is one way in which we do just that. Thanks to our generous donors, each child is able to select a new backpack filled with grade-level supplies. To get an early jump on next year's demand, we invite you to make a donation to help support our efforts. Perhaps you could make it a family event to shop for a pack and supplies for a child in need. What a great lesson to teach your children about sharing and generosity! If it's easier for you, a financial donation would be gratefully appreciated as well and allow us to purchase some items in bulk. Together we can ensure that every child has a backpack and supplies to begin a new year of learning and put a smile on their face.



Students from the Groton-Dunstable Regional Schools are avid supporters of Loaves & Fishes, sponsoring food drives each year.



Littleton Middle School students load boxes of food into waiting vehicles for delivery to the Pantry.

Student Power!

Loaves & Fishes has benefited from the volunteer efforts of our area students for nearly 30 years. From food and clothing drives to extra hands during the preparation for our special events, to stocking shelves, their youthful energy and spirit keeps the mission of helping our neighbors alive. We are truly grateful for parents who encourage and work with their children, the churches who sponsor activities focused on giving, and for the many sports teams and scout troops who donate their time. We are also indebted to the school administrators and teachers who recognize the importance of serving the community and implement programs that are dedicated to volunteering. These programs instill a sense of humanity and the significance of being an active member of a community. In the long term, civic responsibility becomes a way of life. We would like to express our sincere thanks to all the students who have demonstrated a commitment to support Loaves & Fishes. It would be impossible to thank each individual effort and school for their continuous support, but we welcome the opportunity to list the following for their recent generosity:

Ayer-Shirley Regional Schools
Groton-Dunstable Regional Schools
Groton School
Harvard Public Schools
Lawrence Academy
Littleton Public Schools
Nashoba Brooks
Parker Charter School

LOAVES & FISHES Food for Thought

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Hana Barker, Martha Dean, Susanne Harrington,
Julie Kirkwood

MOST-NEEDED ITEMS

Canned Meats
Canned White Tuna
Helpers
Boxed Potatoes
Boxed Flavored Rice
Canned Pears
Canned Pineapple
Catsup/Mayo
Pasta & Pasta Sauce
Shampoo/Conditioner
Toothpaste/Deodorant
With our growing client population, all shelf stable food items are needed and greatly appreciated.



**SPRING INTO ACTION!
BECOME A VOLUNTEER!**

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 6th
Good Friday Walk

MAY 12
Postal Workers' Food Drive

MONTH OF MAY
Backpack Program begins

MONTH OF JUNE
Bottle and Can Drive, Littleton
Recycling Center

Volunteer Orientation Sessions
1st & 3rd Wednesday of each month, 6:30 pm

Food Drop-Off Locations

AYER: Ayer Post Office, Nashoba Valley Medical Center, North Middlesex Savings Bank, The Cottage Restaurant

DEVENS: North Middlesex Savings Bank, Anytime Fitness

GROTON: North Middlesex Savings Bank, Donelan's Supermarket, Groton Post Office, Groton Public Library, Shaw's Supermarket, Middlesex Bank, Town Hall

HARVARD: Harvard Post Office, Harvard Police Department

LITTLETON: Citizen's Savings Bank, Donelan's Supermarket, North Middlesex Savings Bank, Northern Bank & Trust, Littleton Police Department, Littleton Post Office

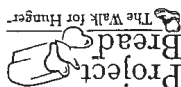
SHIRLEY: Shirley Post Office, Hazen Library, Shirley Fire Department, North Middlesex Savings Bank, Phoenix Park

ALL 6 TOWNS: Many places of worship

For more information or directions to Loaves & Fishes, visit us online at:
www.loavesfishespantry.org
or call us:-978-772-4627



Has your address changed? Please e-mail us at
tohelp@loavesfishespantry.org or
call 978-772-4627x300



Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Ayer, MA 01432
Permit No. 4

Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry, Inc.
P.O. Box 1
Ayer, MA 01432