Loaves & Fishes 30th Anniversary

How it All Started
In 1983, three women recognized a need in their community—people were hungry. With the help of two local churches, St. Andrews Church and The Federated Church, both of Ayer, and a team of volunteers, they provided 50 food insecure families—meaning they were unsure where their next nutritious meal would come from—food in that first year. In our 30th year, Loaves & Fishes is serving almost 1,000 food insecure families.

Loaves & Fishes has had many locations since the early days, and in 2006 after a massive, volunteer-run capital campaign, we moved into our new building at 234 Barnum Road in Devens. Because of the incredible demand for service, we are already outgrowing our space and are exploring new ways to solve this challenge.

What YOU’VE Accomplished
Since 1983, we’ve seen many victories in the fight against hunger thanks to the support of volunteers, donors, companies, organizations, families, students, parents and individuals, all standing behind our goal to end hunger and our mission to advocate for our clients. We are providing healthier food, developing new programs for our clients and improving the lives of those we serve. “Thanks to the support throughout our communities, from individuals to corporations, from community and civic groups to local churches, Loaves & Fishes distributes over 8,000 lbs of food each week.

The Celebration
On August 3, 2013, we commemorated the exact date of our first pantry session by holding a celebration at the pantry to honor those who have helped along the way. Loaves & Fishes thanks volunteers who sort cans, farmers who donate fresh-picked produce, Boy and Girl Scout troops and letter carriers who organize food drives, businesses that donate food by the truckload, the school child who donates a can of soup, the grant agencies and private donors who help with operations and the many community members and volunteers who made this anniversary possible.

What’s New?
Visit our new website at www.loavesfishespantry.org

We distribute over 8,000 lbs of food each week
Volunteers in the Spotlight!

More than 300 active individuals volunteered over 20,000 hours last year at the Pantry. In our 30th anniversary year, it seems fitting to honor our volunteers and the key roles they play in the success of our fundraising, board activities, office work, property work and pantry operations. Over the next several issues of our newsletter, you will “meet” some of our volunteers and hear what they have to say about their time at Loaves & Fishes.

Marge Payne of Littleton volunteers as our Greeter during open pantry sessions. She spent 47 years as an Occupational Therapist before coming to the Pantry. “I absolutely love Loaves & Fishes” says Marge, who feels lucky she can continue to use her skills working with people. Her greatest satisfaction comes from recognizing a new client appearing “distressed” and providing them “with a smile or a little laugh before they walk down the hall to learn how great Loaves & Fishes is!”

Want to help?

Loaves & Fishes is in need of volunteers. We are coming up on our busiest time of year serving those who are hungry in our communities. The only qualification required to volunteer is your desire to help someone in need. You don’t need any special skills; you don’t need a college degree; and there is no required time commitment!

Visit our website at www.loavesfishespantry.org or call (978) 772-4627 x 300 and find out how you can help.

Do you own a business? Send some employees to help during open pantry sessions. It’s a great team building experience!

Are you a stay-at-home parent? Join us for a few hours while the kids are at school.

Are you retired? Consider spending time at Loaves & Fishes to lend a hand.

Make it a family affair! Spend some quality time together helping your neighbors!

Extraordinary Young People Getting Involved

Last year, Andrea Long of Harvard started thinking about how much joy it brings her to plan her son, Aiden’s birthday party with him. She then started to think about how much all the supplies cost and how hard it must be for parents who aren’t able to purchase these items. “We love planning parties at our house and I thought about how much fun it would be to put birthday bags together throughout the year for children in need.” Andrea and Aiden have filled bags with all the items needed to throw a birthday party, complete with cake mix, frosting and party gifts. Each bag is labeled with the appropriate age and is available in a special section of the food pantry for clients whose children have upcoming birthdays.

A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU

HANA BARKER

Hana has donated hundreds of hours of her time as well as her technical expertise during the past 9 years as our volunteer newsletter designer. As she moves onto other adventures we wish her well and offer her our sincere thanks!

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Aidan Long and his friend, Caroline Maiore, both age 9, delivering Birthday in a Bag.
Join Our Harvest Club!
Become a Gold, Silver or Bronze Partner!

Our Harvest Club includes businesses and civic organizations who partner with Loaves & Fishes. Members of our Harvest Club support us in many ways, including financial support, goods and services and volunteering. Visit our website at www.loavesfishespantry.org and find out how to become a Gold, Silver or Bronze Partner.

Harvest Club Gold Partners ($5,000 or more of support this past year)

Bemis Associates
Cisco Systems, Inc.
Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts
Donelan’s Supermarket (Acton, Littleton and Pepperell)
Emergency Food & Shelter National Board
Greater Boston Food Bank
Greater Lowell Community Foundation
Hannaford Supermarket (Ayer, Townsend)
Harvard Lions Club
JK Farnsworth Company
Nashoba Good Friday Walk, Inc.
Shaw’s Supermarket, Groton
Target
Trader Joe’s
Walmart

Visit our website at www.loavesfishespantry.org to learn more about our Harvest Club, our Community Partners and how you can become a partner.

Community Partnerships

2013 Annual Meeting
October 22, 2013

Lisa Martel (pictured) was the recipient of the “Grande Award” for Outstanding Volunteer Service. Congratulations, Lisa, and thank you for your service!

Seven out of the eleven volunteers honored for the most hours donated during the past year.

Volunteers receiving and sorting 7,416 lbs of food delivered from the Shirley Scout Drive on Sunday, November 10th. Thank you!

Even Anonymous Partners...

Hildreth Elementary School in Harvard recently held a cereal drive to benefit Loaves & Fishes. Their donation was valued at $1,401! Amazing!

Jake Riggert, a teenager from Groton, (not pictured), was about to pay his parents back for something they bought him over the summer. His parents offered up a different idea: “We told him, instead of paying us back, use the money in a charitable way. We suggested the Loaves & Fishes Backpack Drive.” Jake went shopping at Target and with the amount of money he owed his parents, was able to buy ten backpacks and fill them with supplies. Thank you, Jake!

300 backpacks filled with supplies were distributed to area children during our Backpack Program in August

Every quarter, an anonymous business donor sends us a shipment of brand name laundry detergent! Even though they prefer to remain anonymous, we are grateful for the spirit of community partnership. This quarterly donation provides families with an expensive and necessary everyday item. Thank you!

Pictured is one of our volunteers, Joanne Ouellette, with a recent delivery.
Thanksgiving Dinner Distribution

On Monday, November 25th, Loaves & Fishes will hold our annual Thanksgiving Dinner Distribution event. Families receive all of the fixings for their Thanksgiving celebration complete with stuffing, gravy, pie, cranberry sauce, juice, fresh vegetables and even a turkey or chicken. This event requires many hands and hearts to be successful. Visit our website at www.loavesfishespantry.org or call (978) 772-4627 x300 to find out more about how you can help.

Volunteer crew at last years Thanksgiving Dinner Distribution Event! What a great time!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Monthly Volunteer Orientation Sessions
1st Wednesday evening at 6:30PM
3rd Thursday morning at 9:30AM

Thanksgiving Dinner Distribution Prep
Set-up and donation receiving hours:
Saturday and Sunday, November 23rd and 24th from 1-3PM

Thanksgiving Dinner Distribution Event
Monday, November 25th
9:30AM-11:00AM and 5:30PM-7:00PM

Shop For Your Parents
Shriver Job Corps Center, Devens
Saturday, December 14th

Holiday Dinner Distribution Prep
Set-up and donation receiving hours:
Saturday and Sunday, December 14th and 15th from 1-3PM

Holiday Dinner Distribution Event
Monday, December 16th
9:30AM-11:00AM and 5:30PM-7:00PM

Shop for Your Kids
Bob Eisengreen Community Center, Devens
Thursday, December 19th

Goodlie Company to Perform at ASRHS
Thursday, December 19th, 7:00PM to benefit Loaves & Fishes

Yuletide Celebration at Ayer Library
Saturday, December 21st, 1-4PM to benefit Loaves & Fishes

Shirley Arts
Community Christmas Concert to benefit Loaves & Fishes
Sunday, December 22nd 2:00PM
Ayer Shirley Regional Middle School

Holiday Dinner Distribution

We need your help to make our Holiday Dinner Distribution, scheduled for Monday, December 16th, a success. Please consider donating food, financially or with the gift of your time. If you are interested in learning more about how you can help, visit our website at www.loavesfishespantry.org or call us at (978) 772-4627 x300. It’s a wonderful program which helps so many families and will definitely remind you of the true meaning of the season.

DINNER DISTRIBUTIONS MOST NEEDED ITEMS

Stuffing
Frozen Pies (apple/pumpkin)
Gravy (Turkey or Chicken)
Broth (Turkey or Chicken)
Nuts/Fancy Crackers/Fancy Snacks
Yams
Coffee, Tea & Cocoa
100% Juice
Frozen Turkeys (16 lbs. or more)
Canned Hams (3lbs or more)

Please deliver your donations during any Open Pantry Session or from 1-3PM on Saturday, November 23rd
Sunday, November 24th
Saturday, December 14th
Sunday, December 15th
Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry
234 Barnum Road, Devens

Donate Appreciated Stock—Increase Your Tax Benefit
Consider donating your appreciated stock shares to Loaves & Fishes before the end of the year. It’s a great way to claim a charitable donation deduction, avoid capital gains tax and support the Pantry in our mission to help our neighbors. Contact our Treasurer at dougle6@gmail.com to learn more.
Shop For Your Parents Holiday Program

Shop For Your Parents, an event run by Loaves & Fishes volunteers to benefit our clients, will take place on Saturday, December 14th. The event will be held at the Shriver Job Corps Center, 270 Jackson Road, Devens. This special day includes a family breakfast, a visit with Santa and of course, “shopping”. The program provides an opportunity for children of Loaves & Fishes clients to select presents for their parents or guardians at no cost and it provides memories they will carry for a lifetime.

If you’d like to support the program, we are accepting cash donations or gifts for the parents. It’s important to note, however, we can only accept NEW gifts with a minimum value of $10.00.

Shop For Your Kids Holiday Program

It’s the Most Wonderful Time of the Year!

It’s back...the highly anticipated Shop For Your Kids event to benefit clients of Loaves & Fishes. This year the event will take place at the Bob Eisengreen Community Center, Devens on Thursday, December 19th.

For years, thanks to the generous donations from our supporters, we have helped hundreds of children enjoy a happy holiday. This event requires more than 100 volunteers to collect, sort and display donations and to help our clients choose presents for their children. We are asking for your help once again this season for donations of new, unwrapped toys for children from infancy to age 18. We are especially in need of gifts for “tween” and teen children. Visit our website at www.loavesfishespantry.org to view the most desired items for the 2013 Holiday season. Donations will be accepted at the Bob Eisengreen Community Center from 6PM-8PM on November 18th, December 2nd, 9th and 16th and also at the following collection box locations: Police Stations in Ayer, Groton, Harvard, Littleton and Shirley, Littleton High School, Littletowne Toys and the Littleton and Shirley libraries. We are also grateful for monetary donations. If you would like to sponsor a toy drive, host a donation box or volunteer for this event, please contact us at LFshop4yourkids@gmail.com.

Wrapping presents to bring home for the holidays!

Coordinators (“elves”), Joan and Marie

Lauren and Elaine help wrap presents.

Excited to meet Santa Claus!

Shriver Job Corps and the Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce will sponsor the event again this year. Additional support is needed. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, please visit our web site at www.loavesfishespantry.org to learn how.

Checks should be made out to “Loaves & Fishes” with “Shop For Your Parents” noted in the memo area. Checks may be mailed to Loaves & Fishes, c/o PO Box 215, Ayer, MA 01432.

For gift donation drop-off or pick-up information, event hours, or to learn more about how you can volunteer for this special holiday event, please contact the program coordinators, Marie Allen at 978-772-7510 or mallen@stemsons.com and Joan Pena at 978-772-4440 or jpena@mediapowerinc.com.
Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry, Inc.
PO Box 1
Ayer, MA 01432

Has your address changed?
Please email us at
tohelp@loavesfishespantry.org
or call 978-772-4627 x300
Let us know if you would rather have an
Electronic Newsletter!

Most Needed Items
Soups
White Tuna
Canned Pasta
Helpers/Pasta Sides
Rice-a-Roni/
Boxed Flavored Rice
Canned Beets/Spinach/Corn
Chick Peas/Garbanzo Beans
100% Fruit Juice
Refried Beans
Peanut Butter
Feminine Care Products
Diapers, size 5 and larger
Deodorant

Follow us on Twitter LoavesFishesMA
Search “Loaves-Fishes-Pantry-in-Devens-MA”

Collection Box Locations

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Donation boxes can also be found in many places of worship in all six towns served by Loaves & Fishes