

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

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STAFF

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

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



HELP US STAMP OUT HUNGER

21st Annual Postal Workers' Food Drive

On May 11th, we will be participating in the 21st Annual Postal Workers' Food Drive. This nationwide effort, which helps raise awareness about hunger and collects food for pantries across the country, is the largest and most critical annual food drive for Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry. The donations we receive during this one day effort will allow us to stock our shelves with food that will help sustain us into 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 in a bag 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 11th 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.



LETTER CARRIERS' **FOOD DRIVE**
SAT., MAY 11, 2013

29TH ANNUAL GOOD FRIDAY WALK RAISED \$29,000!

It was a beautiful day in more ways than one. On March 29th, under partly sunny skies, approximately 305 people participated in the 29th Annual Good Friday Walk, and we reached our goal of \$29,000! Judging by the smiles on the faces of our walkers and volunteers everyone enjoyed the day and felt good, knowing that their efforts would go a long way towards helping their neighbors in need.

Our success was due to many, many volunteers who worked to coordinate and staff the Walk, help with the registration, data entry, the rest stop and the "Toe Truck." Thank you to Fruitlands for letting our walkers use their rest rooms at the half-way point, the folks who donated, cooked or prepared and served the refreshments and the Harvard Congregational Church for once again letting us use the parish hall as a starting and ending point for the Walk. To the many walkers and donors who sponsored our walkers, we are grateful for your support and thank you for making this amazing event such a success.



Almost there! Approximately 300 people participated in the 29th Annual Good Friday Walk

LIFTING AND FEEDING OUR NEIGHBORS

Take a Walk in Someone Else's Shoes

Hunger is not confined to small sectors of our society or in specific faraway neighborhoods. In fact, food insecurity and hunger is a growing problem right here in our own communities. Having to walk into a food pantry and ask for help is hard! We at Loaves & Fishes understand this need and strive to make anyone who walks through our doors feel comfortable, welcomed, reassured and, perhaps most importantly, heard.

We are sometimes asked "How do you know if pantry clients are really in need and not abusing the system?" For the past 30 years, our philosophy has been that food will be provided to individuals who say they are in need. The pantry operates on an honor system and income is not verified. A client only needs to provide a proof of residence in one of our six towns (Ayer, Devens, Groton, Harvard, Littleton and Shirley) to receive food. If you have the courage to walk through our doors—we will help you. Is there abuse? Probably, but we believe that there isn't very much. There will always be a degree of abuse in any system, but we choose to look past that and focus on the single-parent households struggling to make ends meet, the individuals whose employment has been affected by the downturn in the economy, and senior citizens on a fixed income. Hunger is an issue right here in our communities, and Loaves & Fishes will continue our mission and our goal of feeding and helping our neighbors—just as we have since 1983.

The next time you gather around your table for a meal with loved ones, remember that somewhere not too far away, a family is enjoying a meal with their loved ones, too, or a senior citizen knows that people care, or a veteran doesn't feel forgotten—because of Loaves & Fishes and our supporters who make our outreach possible. Walking in someone else's shoes, if just for a moment, helps us focus on those who are in need.

Who comes to Loaves & Fishes?

40% Retired or disabled

25% Employed (full-time, part-time, underemployed)

24% Unemployed

Are You a Former Client?

Please share your story with us by contacting Theresa at (978)772-4627 x312 or clientadvocate@loavesfishespantry.org.



Struggling to make ends meet?

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

Come to an open pantry session!

Every Wednesday & Friday 9:45 am – 12:30 pm

First & third Saturday 9:00 am – 11 am

Second Tuesday of the month 6 – 8 pm

Bring a recent utility bill as a proof of residency.

- Shop at the pantry twice a month for food and clothing.
- Receive groceries worth \$300 to \$400 each month.
- 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!





Over 20,000 hours of volunteer time made the Pantry run smoothly in 2012!

JOIN US FOR A VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION SESSION!

**1st Wednesday of each month
6:30 pm**

**3rd Thursday of each month
at 9:30 am**

Make a Difference!

Make an impact close to home – Loaves & Fishes needs your help! With the significant rise in client numbers we have seen over the past year, we need additional volunteers. Volunteer opportunities include, but aren't limited to, staffing our open pantry sessions, working in our clothing room, driving to pick-up donations, mowing our lawn, or lending a hand in our office. Are you looking for an opportunity to volunteer as a family? We are always in need of volunteers to help receive and check donations and stock shelves. Perhaps you would enjoy writing, editing, planning events or serving on one of our many committees.

The only qualification required is your desire to help someone in need. You don't need any special skills or a college degree. We are glad to have your help for two hours a year or for numerous hours each month. We will work with you to find a job you'll enjoy that will fit with your schedule. All you need to do is attend a New Volunteer Orientation Session held on the first Wednesday evening of each month at 6:30 pm and the third Thursday morning of each month at 9:30 am. Please contact Karen at (978)772-4627 x300 or email at tohelp@loavesfishespantry.org for more information or to sign-up for an orientation session. Hope to see you soon!



Clockwise, from the top: Kathleen and Ann have a laugh as they receive donations while Temple and Brenda work together to sort and display clothing. Edna and Alice pause for a photo. Food Distributors offer our clients an extra hand as they shop in the Pantry. There's always sorting to be done!



Backpack Program

Remember the excitement of back-to-school shopping as you picked out a new backpack and school supplies? Today, choosing just the right backpack and the essential crayons, pencils, markers and notebooks is still a much anticipated event in most families. Unfortunately, without our backpack program, many of our youngest clients would never experience that particular excitement and joy.

At Loaves & Fishes, we try to make life normal for the children, and our Backpack Program is one way in which we do just that. Thanks to our generous donors each child served by the Pantry is able to select a new backpack filled with appropriate grade-level supplies. Last year, we distributed over 400 backpacks to students in pre-K through high school. This number continues to grow each year and we invite you to help us get an early jump on next year's demand. Please consider 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 is easier for you, a financial donation would be gratefully appreciated and will allow us to purchase some items in bulk.

Together we can help bring the excitement of a new backpack and supplies to more children beginning a new year of learning in our communities.

Please check our website for more information and a list of supplies needed. Donations can be dropped off at Loaves & Fishes during the following times:

- Every Wednesday & Friday from 9:45 am – 12:30 pm
- The 1st and 3rd Saturdays from 9:00 – 11:00 am
- The 2nd Tuesday from 6:00 – 8:00 pm
- Monday and Wednesday evenings from 7:00 – 8:00 pm



SPRING CLEANING!

Please think of us as you spring clean your closets! We would welcome the donation of gently-used Spring and Summer clothing.

ADOPT THE PANTRY

Support 30th Anniversary "30 for 30" Campaign

It's Easy! Pick a month to support a local food drive for families in need.

We are looking for local businesses and civic groups to join our "30 for 30" campaign—run a food drive for 30 days to support our 30 years of service to the six local towns of Ayer, Devens, Groton, Harvard, Littleton and Shirley. Select a month in the calendar year to support us by organizing a food drive. Loaves & Fishes has seen a 42% increase in demand since 2007 and a 10% increase last year alone. We need the assistance of the entire community so that we can continue caring for these families.

The increased need is being driven, in part, by the growing number of people struggling to keep up with the rising cost of living, from food to utilities. The face of hunger is changing, and Loaves & Fishes is seeing more and more people who need help. During 2012, 332 new families were welcomed to the Pantry. Many of these new families report having been comfortable middle class families until one or both wage earners became unemployed or underemployed. They struggle with the challenges of keeping their homes from foreclosure, heating their homes, and feeding their children. Loaves & Fishes is reaching out to local businesses to sign-up for a month-long food drive to help these people at their most vulnerable time.

We can provide guidelines for running a food drive as well as signage and publicity. Schedule

a tour or book a speaker for your business or organization. We can assist in picking up the food once it's collected if that is needed. Loaves & Fishes will promote those companies that support us in our "30 for 30" campaign. That is why the spring and summer months are critical as donations are historically low. Please contact our Drives Coordinator at drives@loavesfishespantry.org or call 978-772-4627 for more information.



Approximately
400,500 pounds of
food is distributed
annually!

MAKE A CHILD SMILE

At Loaves & Fishes we understand that when a family is struggling to make ends meet their struggle impacts every member of that household, even the youngest. Please consider helping us normalize life for the children by supporting our Campership/Enrichment Program.

Our goal is to provide each child who visits the Pantry with a small scholarship to help defray the cost of attending a summer camp, taking dance class, participating in school-sponsored clubs or playing a recreational sport with his or her classmates. If you would like to give a child an opportunity to smile please consider a contribution to our Campership/Enrichment Program. Together we can make a difference for our youngest neighbors.

L&F THANKS LIZ

Since mid-January, we have had the pleasure of getting to know Miss Elizabeth Rose, a student intern from St. Anselm's College in Manchester, NH. Liz has volunteered over 20 hours each week with a focus on our marketing, public relations and community outreach efforts. She has been a welcome addition to our Pantry Family and will be sorely missed when she graduates in May. We thank her for her dedication and wish her well in her future endeavors. We'll miss you Liz!



From left: Karen DeGagne, Volunteer & Office Coordinator, Elizabeth Rose, Loaves & Fishes intern, and Patricia Stern, Executive Director.

Bemis Celebrates 11,000 Hours of Community Service to Loaves & Fishes

Loaves & Fishes is proud to announce that over the past ten years Shirley based Bemis Associates, Inc., the leading manufacturer of heat seal films for the apparel and footwear industries, has provided 11,000 hours of volunteer time to the Pantry.

Ten years ago Scott Howard, Vice President of Bemis, along with two other employees volunteered at Loaves & Fishes as part of the United Way's "Day of Caring" initiative. Scott and his team were there to paint rooms at Loaves & Fishes. What they learned was that the Pantry not only provided food to its clients, but also helped them to stabilize their lives and guided them towards regaining their independence and self-reliance.



Scott and his brother Steve, President of Bemis, run the company based on their parents' philosophy that the business exists to benefit not just the shareholders, but also the stakeholders: employees, partners, customers, the environment and the community. Bemis allows and encourages each employee to donate 40 hours a year to volunteer and they back that up by paying the employee while they are volunteering! As a corporation Bemis' number one charity is Loaves & Fishes, but they also support many different charities in the local community and their employees can choose where they want to volunteer. The resulting culture promotes pride in the workplace. Employees work harder and smarter because they are working with a business that cares. And Bemis has found that customers care as well because many use a company's community service as one of the benchmarks for choosing a business to work with.

Bemis provides more than just volunteers to Loaves & Fishes. Over the years they have taken on more responsibilities such as sending a truck to the Greater Boston Food Bank each week to pick up the Pantry's allotment of food, donating and managing the IT infrastructure, computers and phone system as well as plowing and shoveling after winter storms. Bemis' dedication allows Loaves & Fishes to focus on helping our clients.

"Loaves & Fishes is a great organization that is well run. They don't just give people a hand out, they give people a hand up and that's why our employees get so much out of volunteering there," stated Scott. "We hope that other businesses learn from us as to what a good business decision this is to help out in the community. It's good for business and employees take more pride in the workplace."



Thanks for the Memories

Lucia's Tavola, of 31 Main Street, Ayer, recently hosted our first Historians Reception. Invited to this reception were members of our community who have been in some way involved with Loaves & Fishes, some as far back as 1983 when the Pantry began. We would like to thank our guests for sharing their moving stories of the early days. Thank you to Lucia's Tavola as well for their generosity and hospitality.

LOAVES & FISHES *Food for Thought*

NEWSLETTER TEAM

Hana Barker, Martha Dean, Judy Grande, Susanne Harrington, Kathleen O'Connor, Mary Lou O'Connor, Rosie Pellizzari

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 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:

Alan Aronie
Alicia Dwyer and Demetrious Karis
All Houses of Worship
Andrew Sigel
Azuki Systems
Barbara Murray
Blackbird Café
Bob and Ellen Hargraves
C&M Woolcock
Carol Chodorow
Cecile Beyh
Christopher and Kirsta Davey
Diane Hall
Donald and Janet Stevens
Elson Harmon
Eric and Annemarie Spada
Filho's Cucina
Friends of Nashoba Valley Medical Center
Hannaford Supermarkets
James McPhee and Laurie Nuzzo-McPhee
Jeffrey Robinson
John and Cynthia Rowatt
Judy Grande
Karen Spinelli
Lee Burton
Lucia's Tavola
Main Street Café
Majestic Painting, Inc.
Mary Markham
Maryellen Lorio
Murphy Insurance Company
Nicholas Malnati
Pamela J. Kaiser
Philip Rayla and Diane Herlihy-Rayla
Raymond Galloni
Richard and Jean Walsh
Skinfluentials
Sorrento's Brick Oven Pizza
Steven and Ann Marie Rowse
Subway of Littleton
Thomas and Lynne Shook
Thomas Brando
Timothy A. Ingraham
Vicky Roche
Warren and Meredith Kundert
William and Lara Riley

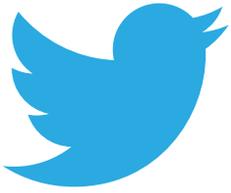


Help us reach
3000 "likes"
on Facebook

to celebrate our 30th
Anniversary year!

Scan the QR code or
search "Loaves-Fishes-P
antry-in-Devens-MA"





**Follow us on Twitter
@LoavesFishesMA**

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

**Since 2007,
Loaves & Fishes
has recorded a 42%
increase in clients!**

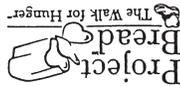
**Won't you join our electronic
newsletter mailing list?
This will save money on postage,
and stock our shelves with
more food!
Send us your e-mail address!**

MOST-NEEDED ITEMS

Cereal
Pork -N- Beans/Baked Beans
Canned Diced Tomatoes
Hamburger & Tuna Helpers
Boxed/Flavored Rice & Pasta Sides
Ketchup/ Mayo/Mustard
Canned White Tuna
Canned Corn /Spinach/
Mixed Vegetables
Boxed Mac & Cheese
Canned Pasta
Soap, Deodorant
Diapers -Size 5 & up
Feminine Care Products



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



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