

## Article 23

# Calvary Food Pantry: Postal service, St. Joseph first-graders lend hand to mission to feed the hungry

May 31, 2015 • [Nancy Sheffield](#) | [Special to The Citizen](#)



Seen here are first-graders, sixth grade attendants, and teachers from St. Joseph School lending a hand in the Calvary Food Pantry's garden at The Faatz-Crofut Home in Auburn, NY with Vicky M.J., head gardener and Elizabeth S. B., administrator, looking on.

Did you give canned goods to the yearly postal drive, here in Auburn? Yes? Thank you! Donations are appreciated throughout the year. Remember: Hunger in Auburn isn't going away. It is constantly within the community and pushed by untimely, sudden forces like the loss of a loved one or a once-secure job. I see it constantly but I rely on services here at the pantry, like Cassie O. of Cayuga County NOEP, who can offer SNAP (food stamps) to my people once a week, or Joanne W., from United Healthcare, who helps with medical insurance. We, together, form a barrier, I hope, against odds of defeating hunger brought on by desolation and despair.

As I told you last month, I also count on many sources for donations — from foundations, people throughout the community, Auburn churches and, finally, the Food Rescue Program of the Food Bank of CNY to put food in my pantry and on my food racks. I invite the community to see my racks. I am very pleased how the racks turned out. I had them built by a volunteer and have never seen anything like them. They are centrally positioned. Large, imposing and standing 4 feet tall, they provide two rows of shelves that wrap around the floor. We place all our fresh vegetables and fruits there from the CNY Food Bank programs once a week, usually on Monday, with bread from Panera and canned good from various businesses.

We also offer a variety of foods and personal care products. Any guest in our demographic area can get a plastic bag and fill it with food, for free, any time the pantry is open. If a person comes and lives in an area supported by another food pantry, they are welcomed to pick food from the rack once. But, unfortunately, they are then given the information where their food pantry exists. We gave out 107,399 meals in 2014. We give double that amount of items from our food racks. I have only the resources for my area and must limit access to other people who live outside my

neighborhood. But my wish is someday have my racks filled all three days, by my volunteers, with endless amount of food, so when I can, I'll open the racks to anyone who comes because I have so much to give away! All of us who run food pantries have this dream.

Regarding our garden at The Faatz-Crofut Home across the street: This is our second spring, (we plan to plant vegetables for our food racks), with five available boxes. To my delight, I received a call and was told the first-grade class of St. Joseph School wanted to learn how to plant vegetables for “hungry people,” and could they come? My head gardener, Vicky M.J., last week prepared a box with fertilizer and soil. Thirty-three children showed up this past Monday. The first-graders were accompanied by sixth-grader attendants and two teachers. Vicky and Elizabeth B. (administrator) taught the children how to plant beans. Each child brought a tool to make a hole and everyone got a chance to plant bean seeds. Few children have gardens of their own, and they asked all sorts of questions. The children went away with extra seeds and pots to grow the seeds in their classrooms. The children were told the classroom seeds, when they grow tall, can be replanted back into the garden. They are coming back once a week to watch and water their “beans.” Anyone else want to help? Call me! Please volunteer, donate or reciprocate in kind.