



The Northampton
SURVIVAL CENTER
An Emergency Food Pantry and Referral Service for Hampshire County
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Volunteer Newsletter
Fall/Winter 2009

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Busy Times...

Dearest NSC Volunteers,

As many of you are aware, we have been growing by leaps and bounds: a record-setting post office food drive, a near doubling in the number of volunteers in just two years, access to a bit more physical space, redesign of our existing pantry space...the list goes on.

To be able to handle this capacity of growth, we have revisited various policies: pantry shift hours, the number of volunteers on any given shift, our food distribution chart, and more. As always, we thank you for your flexibility, understanding, and trust in us that we have plans in place, for even our wildest sounding ideas!

Please read on for more information about some amazing news and upcoming events!

Inspiring Major Donation

An unpretentious neighbor who lives a simple life has given the Northampton Survival Center an unprecedented gift of \$200,000 in honor of his parents. The gift will go toward a much-needed renovation and expansion at the Northampton Survival Center.

Several years ago, Richard volunteered at the Northampton Survival Center helping stock the emergency food pantry, and he remembered what he saw.

A lifelong member of Edwards Church, Richard was sitting with Carl Erickson, a board member of the Northampton Survival Center, and wondering how to broach the subject of a major gift. Then Carl told Richard about the need for a renovation and expansion at the Center. Richard decided to help launch the effort with a \$200,000 gift, hoping to inspire others to contribute as well.

Richard himself was deeply touched to learn only after he made his gift that his parents had also made two donations to the Northampton Survival Center in the 1990s.

He felt a connection to his parents in these gifts that he never dreamed existed, and a tacit blessing of his decision.

Please see *Inspiring Donation* on page 3 for more

“I live in this community, and I wanted to give back to it. I see the problems this city has, and I wanted to act on them. I hope this donation makes other people think about how they can help, not just looking for the city to take care of everything. Even if they can't give \$200,000, people should still think about what they can do to help,” he said.

November 2009 Marks our 30th Anniversary!

Keep your eyes out for upcoming ways you can help us celebrate this landmark!

Thanksgiving Program to Begin Soon



Starting on November 1, The NSC will once again be distributing \$10 gift cards to grocery stores, frozen turkeys and special food items specific to the Thanksgiving holiday.

November is historically our busiest month of the year. To help this month as run smoothly as possible, we anticipate a record need for volunteers. We thank you in advance for lending a hand, and hanging in there with us during this exceptionally busy (and rewarding) month.

For those of you who wish to make a Thanksgiving donation before November 25th, \$10 gift cards to Stop & Shop and Big Y turkey coins go directly to clients.

Gift Program Ending

December will look a little different this year at the Northampton Survival Center. If you've seen the office during Decembers past, you might recall that the NSC has run an increasingly growing gift program.

Unfortunately, at this point, we've run out of room to operate the program and have found that it detracts from our core mission of feeding people. Therefore, this December, clients will be given information about other gift programs, including the Sidney F. Smith Toy Fund and several programs run by and through the Salvation Army. Many thanks for your understanding and to all who have contributed to the program.

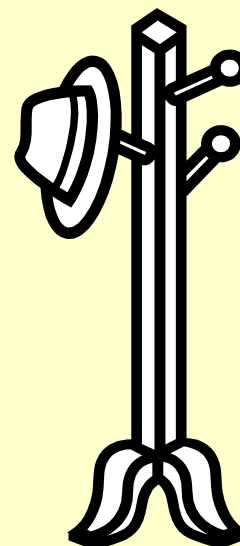


Volunteer Nook

A comfortable, accessible volunteer space has long been on our list of improvements we would like to see, and we are happy to say that we have a start on such a space!

Located in the new garage space, the volunteer nook features a refrigerator, coat rack, coffee maker & water pitcher, bulletin board for recent events, a location where you can pick up a Volunteer badge to wear on your shift, and more to come!

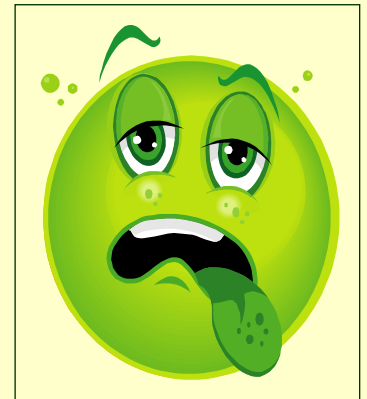
It's a small way for us to express our gratitude for your exceptional efforts every day. We hope you will enjoy this space, and make it your own. Please don't forget to continue to come by the office to say hello!



Wellness during the cold & flu season

As we enter the cold and flu season, please keep the following in mind:

- If you are sick, please, call or email as soon as is possible to allow us time to find a substitute volunteer.
- If you are at all under the weather, please do stay home. We both want you to take care of yourself, and reduce the risk of spreading illness among fellow volunteers, clients, and staff.
- During this year of concern of new strains of the flu, we have a working plan in place to deal with the potential need to respond to emergency closings, wide-spread illness, or working at a severely limited capacity.
- To avoid becoming ill, be diligent about frequent hand washing, remember to drink plenty of fluids and rest well!



UPCOMING HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

November

- 11 Veterans Day
- 26 & 27: Thanksgiving

December

- 24 & 25: Christmas

January

- 1: New Year's Day
- 18: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

WINTER WEATHER POLICY

During the winter months, if the Northampton Public Schools are closed, The Northampton Survival Center will also be closed.

In the case of a delayed school opening, the NSC will open as scheduled. If you are unable to make a shift due to local conditions, please call or email as you are able.

Inspiring Donation continued from page 1

Richard's donation, the biggest in the Center's 30-year history, comes at an opportune time. Having just negotiated a fresh, 30-year lease at its city-owned site at 265 Prospect Street, the NSC board has already been hard at work in planning an expansion and renovation to increase the impact of the organization. Miriam Krell Bourke, President of the Northampton Survival Center's Board of Directors, says, "Mr. Moodie's gift is a perfect fit for where the organization is headed. We already have a team of professionals and volunteers working on a new design for the Center and finalizing negotiations with the city about additional space."

According to Executive Director Heidi Nortonsmith, the Center has three main goals for the proposed expansion. "In looking ahead to what our clients will need over the next 30 years, we want to be able to provide people with more food, maximize our ability to serve clients with dignity and respect, and improve the Center's efficiency and comfort for the thousands of people we serve and the hundreds of volunteers who make this work possible."

Interested in learning more about our upcoming expansion? Stop by Heidi's desk for a rendering of one potential example.

Greetings from the Program Director:

As mentioned on the cover page, the NSC *is* changing. I just want to highlight some things that have happened during the past year.

As you know, we acquired some new space last spring which allowed us to hold the Post Office Food Drive on site for the first time. Immediately after the food drive, we rearranged the space to be able to hold all the food for the Kids Summer Food Program. Then, at the beginning of September, the space was again reorganized as storage for our regular food program, and we created an area devoted to checking dates and quality of incoming food donations. And, most recently, we added the beautiful volunteer nook. Is your head spinning yet? It's difficult to remember how we ever got along without all that extra space!



Other changes in the past year include:

- USDA food is rarely bagged by folks working at the pantry counter. Thank you, stockers!
- The addition of pantry facilitators is helping to keep things running smoothly during pantry.
- Clients are now rewarded for bringing reusable cloth bags. Less plastic – yay!
- Plastic totes are available for carrying multiple items to the pantry counter for clients so that cans aren't spilling out of your arms. Thank you, Sherry!
- A small black cart is available for stockers to bring food from storage out to the pantry. Thank you Maria S.!
- A metal cart is now in the storage area for holding broken down cardboard so that we are no longer throwing it out the back door.
- With the expanded pantry counter and floor space that happened last fall, we are now often able to schedule 4 pantry counter volunteers each shift, which translates into a much shorter wait time for our clients.



Since change is not something most of us like, I really appreciate your willingness to be flexible and learn new procedures that go along with all these changes so that we can continue to improve services to our clients. For example, we recently changed the food distribution chart so that larger families will get more food than before. The chart looks a bit different, but I hope you will find that it works well after you get used to the changes. As I was hanging the new chart, some volunteers asked me not to have it laminated because the lamination creates a glare and makes the chart difficult to read. (Thank you, Bobbe and Caitlin!) If they had not spoken up, I never would have thought about it. So, especially as we proceed with plans for the renovation of the building, I am happy to talk with you about any questions or concerns you have about the changes listed above or the changes to come. Given the enormous number of volunteers who make this place function, it is wonderful to know that each one of you has the best interests of the NSC at heart.

Thank you for everything!

Sarah

We want to hear from you!

We are always thinking about ways we can best communicate with our 350+ volunteers, and work collaboratively to resolve quandaries.

In the coming weeks and months, we are hoping to introduce a new, interactive, and pretty fun way to have ideas around specific issues.

Please keep your eyes out for new idea generators posted around the pantry, garage, and/or volunteer nook, grab a pen, and join in!



Meaningful volunteer appreciation

As many of you know, we often host a Volunteer Appreciation Dinner around this time of year to thank you for your efforts. This year, in recognition of your deep commitment to our clients' needs, and in a desire to improve your working conditions when you're here, we're focusing all of our available resources on moving forward with our expansion effort. We believe that this reflects and honors your dedicated contributions better than our usual dinner together would at this time. We hope you'll agree, and that you'll join us for a celebratory gathering together once the expansion is completed.

The NSC and new media

The Northampton Survival Center is now on **Facebook!** We have long had a Facebook "Cause", which is a fundraising tool. We are now pleased to announce that we have a "Page", which allows interactive communication between the NSC and a new community. Please consider becoming a fan of our Facebook page, and help us increase awareness of the NSC by sharing your support

We also are quite excited about our new **video**. Located on the NSC website, our new 4 minute long video gives viewers a glimpse of the NSC in action. Take a peek - you are likely to see some familiar faces!

Florence Savings Bank Customer Choice Grant

Thank you for your past support by voting for The NSC in the FSB Customer's Choice Community Grant. In 2008, we received \$2,100 thanks to your votes – allowing us to purchase over 11,000 pounds of food. It is time to vote again, and we hope you will again support us with your vote.

Ballots can be found at Maria's desk, and in the office, at each FSB branch, and on-line at www.florencesavings.com. There is one vote per customer. All ballots must be received by December 31st.

