

## Harvest of Hope Food Pantry – December 10, 2016

November is the doorway to Christmas. This year it seemed to me that merchants began to push Christmas as the month of November began instead of after Thanksgiving. I suppose that we at Harvest of Hope Food Pantry are no different. There are a number of churches that selected an item that they would collect to donate for the Christmas give-away. Plans had to be made. Dates had to be set and all the logistics had to be set in motion. We planned in November to have our December Christmas distribution on two days as close to Christmas as we possibly could. (Clients had to know when to return in December.) We had to set dates so that the churches that were collecting food items for our Christmas distribution would know when their collection had to be completed. And since the distribution is at a special time, we had to schedule volunteers who could be available to work during the distribution. This year, we will begin packing on December 19<sup>th</sup> with the distribution of food occurring on December 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. Plans had to be made and logistics worked out in November in order for everything to work in orderly fashion in December.

But to get to this point, we had to get through November. One thing we know is that in November (and December) the number of people we serve will increase. Some individuals will come who have not been to the food pantry in weeks and even months, thinking that something special will be given out at this season of the year. Because of this it is difficult to prepare week by week. Most months are predictable as to how many clients will come each week, based on an average of the previous two or three months. But this is not the case for November and December.

An additional situation existed this November. We had received chicken from A S Processing here in Americus and frozen french fries from Flagship Food Group in Meridian, Ohio, which we gave out just before Thanksgiving. We had to work out all the logistics for that distribution. The plan was to give the chicken and french fries out on the fourth Tuesday, in the morning to our regular fourth Tuesday clients and in the afternoon to all the clients that had come the first three Tuesdays of November. To do this involved additional workers for the afternoon distribution. If you have never worked with us, you do not know how many workers it takes to keep the food pantry going. We have the best volunteers of any operation with which I have ever been associated. The special Thanksgiving distribution was a tremendous success. We not only had chicken and french fries; we had cabbages from the Minor Brothers and sweet potatoes from the Hagersons. We were able to distribute to about 750 families. It was a blessing. In the morning distribution I was helping a lady carry everything to her car (everything included seven bags of food). As I was putting what I was carrying into her car she said, "This food pantry is a blessing. I could not make it through the month if it wasn't for the food pantry." I said to her, "I appreciate your thanks, but the food pantry is here because of the blessing of the people of Sumter County." All of us who work at the food pantry are really just representatives of the people of Sumter County. We serve as they provide. Each week, we receive thanks from so many of the people who receive food from Harvest of Hope.

"Thank you" seems to be the word of the day. We thank each of you who make Harvest of Hope Food Pantry possible, either with canned goods and dry goods or with your financial support. We need volunteers to serve. We need grocery items to distribute. And we need your financial support. Your financial support enables us to pay our building expenses and to

acquire more food for distribution. I want to remind you that no one who works at the food pantry receives any compensation for their work. We are **ALL** volunteers who have a heart for this ministry. **God is good**. He supplies all of our needs. He uses each of **you** as his hands and feet to supply the needs of Harvest of Hope Food Pantry.

At this Christmas season, we are thankful for the opportunity to serve the Christ who came into this world as a babe. We are thankful for all that each one of you does to enable us to represent you in the Americus-Sumter County area. We covet your continued support and prayers for 2017.

Have a blessed Christmas.

*Sonny Pinckard*

Sonny Pinckard  
Executive Director