

## Harvest of Hope Food Pantry – October 31, 2016

We often use words, but when asked what that word means, we have difficulty actually defining it. Because of this, we sometimes say one thing but the person to whom we are speaking hears something entirely different. At times this is because a word has a number of different meanings. **Volunteer** is one of those words. When I talk about a volunteer, I am talking about a person who of their own free will chooses to do a job without any compensation. They are the unnamed and unsung heroes who work as if they are getting paid because they care. The only thing the Harvest of Hope volunteers receive is a “thank you” when they arrive and a “thank you” when they leave. Our volunteers are the lifeblood of Harvest of Hope Food Pantry and there is no way we could operate without them. I am sure that other charitable operations in Americus would probably say the same thing. However, I think we have the best volunteers of any operation in Americus. We also have more volunteers that work on a regular basis. Many of our volunteers work almost every time we are open and they graciously help with all tasks. And on days that we distribute food, they assist anyone of our clients who have a need. We are blessed to have a cross-section of the Americus-Sumter County community who freely give of themselves each week. I must say that I truly thank each one. I wish I could list the names of each one, to thank them, but the list would be very long and I would hate to leave out any one of them. Each one of them is a valuable part of the operation of Harvest of Hope Food Pantry.

I also must give a special word of thanks to the young ladies and gentlemen of the Baptist Collegiate Ministry who come most months to help when we receive deliveries of food from Second Harvest warehouse in Albany. They move those pallets of food to the back of the warehouse and also move many pallets as we replace the current month’s distribution items for the items to be given out the next month. They work very hard. They are led by Brian Puckett who is teaching them about service.

We give a word of thanks to Koinonia Farms who sends workers most every week to help fulfill our ministry of feeding people. Also, a thank you to Nash Chantal who comes faithfully each week to remove the pile of cardboard and carry it to be recycled.

There are others who volunteer, not necessarily at the food pantry. There are individuals who volunteer to give of their wealth. Some give on a regular basis and others who give as they are led to give. We give a word of thanks to churches who volunteer support through their church budget. There are individuals and organizations who volunteer to give food products to enable us to supplement the food we receive from Second harvest. We are blessed to be able to provide fresh vegetables when in season: beans, squash, zucchini, cabbage, watermelon, sweet potatoes, pears, and so much more. “Thank you” to our farmers and gleaners.

I cannot fail to mention our local Food Lion store. The manager and every employee in the store are always more than willing to help in any way that they can. From Food Lion we receive meat, dairy products, deli products, and produce, all to help us fulfill our mission.

I also want to thank each person who volunteers to talk about Harvest of Hope Food Pantry. That is also essential to our ministry.

Supporting this ministry is our Harvest of Hope Food Pantry Board of Directors. They are a group of dedicated folks from a cross section of the community and the churches whose purpose is to see that this ministry is able to continue to serve those who have a need.

As I write this and look back over it, I realize just how many people in this county are involved in some way with Harvest of Hope Food Pantry and how blessed we are because of all of you. I want to thank each of the above because you are the ones that enable us at the food pantry to serve the Americus-Sumter County Community.

God bless you.

Sonny Pinckard  
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Executive Director