

Notes From The Network

From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I hope you all enjoyed your holidays and that you and your loved ones are entering 2022 happy and healthy! Here at the IFPN we are off to a great start and we have a lot of exciting news to share with you.

First, we are very happy to welcome **Jon Schenk** to our IFPN family as our **Director of Operations**. The position, while very common in organizations of our size and scope, is new to the IFPN, though Jon is not. He has been a volunteer since March of 2021. Over the holidays, he worked alongside our warehouse and volunteer staff to lend a hand. You will read more on Jon inside. In other staff news, we bid a fond farewell to **Denise Hurtado-Valdez**, our home delivery program coordinator, who resigned back in November for personal reasons. Stepping seamlessly into her role is our new home delivery coordinator, **Zoe Garcia**. Zoe also started as a volunteer and joined the staff in 2020. She filled in for Denise last year, which enabled her to take over without a hitch.

I want to provide you with an update on our refrigeration project. After some delays, we finally received the remaining building permits from the Township of Parsippany. The foundation is already poured and next the panels will go up. We expect the final project to be completed by the end of March or early April. This new cold storage unit will greatly increase our capacity to acquire and store more fresh and frozen foods.

We are very excited to announce that this Spring, we will embark on “Phase II”, our main pantry expansion project. Since we opened at our Executive Drive location in 2011, the number of families served has increased by 42% and we are distributing twice as much food. When COVID hit, we saw a 200% surge in new families. Our “client choice” pantry, which was already becoming more crowded as we expanded the variety of foods offered, was closed in order to keep the inside staff and volunteers safe. We are maintaining Client Choice by giving each client

“menus” to fill out while they wait in their cars, and volunteers then fulfill these requests. While this is working, it’s certainly not ideal. We are still screening clients for programs and making referrals, but we miss the one-on-one conversations that would often lead to uncovering additional factors that brought people to the IFPN in the first place.

To restore our sense of community and to prepare us for the future, our friends at the **Margaret A. Darrin Charitable Trust** awarded us a *transformational* grant that will fund the expansion of our main pantry by 228%. We will be adding new equipment and shelving to the pantry and relocating offices to our currently unfinished second floor.

Both of these capacity projects will position us to accommodate future growth, both through our Pantry and Mobile Programs, and equip us to absorb any spikes in demand. It will also allow us to continue to expand the amount and variety of fresh and healthy foods available to our guests. Most importantly, we will be able to give our clients the ability to “shop” for their food in an improved environment, better suited to address their needs today and for years to come.

If you have any questions about these projects feel free to reach out to me! We are extremely grateful to all those who made both projects possible and of course to you for your ongoing support. Whether it is food, funds or time, together we make it possible **every day** for our families, children and seniors to receive the nutrition they need to lead healthier and more fulfilling lives.

Warm regards,



Current Food Needs*

- ▶ **Parmalat, Other Shelf Stable Milk, Dry Milk** (1 qt. size)
- ▶ **Soups** (hearty, low sodium & condensed)
- ▶ **Side Dishes** (Rice-A-Roni, Hamburger Helper, etc.)
- ▶ **Pasta & Spaghetti** (1 lb size preferred; including whole wheat)
- ▶ **Tomato Products** (sauce, crushed, whole, diced, puree, paste)
- ▶ **Canned Meats/Meals, Ravioli, Hash, Stew, Chili**
- ▶ **Boost, Boost Glucose Control, Ensure or Glucerna**
- ▶ **Baby Food: Stage 1, Stage 2 and Stage 3**
- ▶ **Healthy Snacks** (Belvita Breakfast Biscuits, Granola Bars, Ritz Crackers, Wheat Thins, etc.)

* When shopping consider low-salt, low-sugar and gluten-free items.

Save These
DATES

- ▶ **Friday, March 18: Giving Tree Unveiling**
Open House 10:00am-2:00pm

- ▶ **Friday, April 22: Annual Spring Gala,**
Birchwood Manor, Whippany. Details on page 3.

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IFPN Happenings

Addressing College Hunger

Throughout the years numerous studies have been conducted to assess the rate of food insecurity on college campuses. A fall 2019 survey conducted by the **Hope Center at Temple University** indicated that nationwide, 39% of students at two- or four-year schools had experienced food insecurity in the last 30 days, making it harder for them to succeed in their studies. The **County College of Morris (CCM)** currently offers “**Titan’s Table**” a program where students are offered grab and go meals and snacks. However, to fully address the nutritional needs of the students and their families, the IFPN and CCM administrators are working on a pilot program. It will be a full supplemental grocery program that includes food items, proteins, grains, dairy and produce. After completing a brief, confidential intake process, the students will access an online menu to select their food choices, and grocery bags will be packed by our volunteers. These bags will then be delivered to the college so students can pick up their groceries at a convenient time for themselves and the college. The program ensures that students no longer have to worry about where their next meal is coming from which ultimately leads to better learning and success!

IFPN’s Mobile Pantry Rolls On...

In 2017, the IFPN partnered with the **Community Food Bank of NJ** to help distribute free, pre-packed **USDA Senior Food Boxes** which we supplemented with fresh produce and other items. These boxes were delivered by our Mobile Pantry to income-eligible residents in Morristown, Wharton, Butler, Madison, Mt. Olive and Jefferson. Then in 2020, COVID hit and both **Morris County and Dover Housing Authorities** reached out to the IFPN to see if we could begin an emergency food bag program for those seniors who couldn’t leave their apartments and needed food. We began delivering supplemental food bags to senior buildings in Dover, Morristown, Randolph, Rockaway and Wharton. The program grew rapidly and became very popular as a number of these seniors were food insecure even before the pandemic started. IFPN’s **Jessica Revolorio**, who coordinated both senior programs, realized the seniors who met the guidelines for USDA prepacked boxes were finding them too difficult to manage and did not necessarily care for all the foods inside. In August 2021, Jessica suggested switching these seniors to the supplemental bags. The new program, dubbed our **SUN (senior umbrella nutrition) Bag Program**, has become very popular and continues to grow. Our Mobile Pantry currently serves 263 senior households in 10 locations, and made 2,700+ visits in 2021. For more information, contact Jessica at jrevolorio@mcifp.org.

Healthy Choices Program Going Strong

Our **Healthy Choices Nutrition Program** continues to make an impact. In addition to offering healthy food options, we provide clients with monthly nutrition information and an easy to prepare recipe. Educational videos featuring cooking demonstrations are made available online at <https://mcifp.org/get-food/healthy-choices-and-nutrition/>. The program funded in part by **Morristown Medical Center Community Health** is really making a difference. In a recent survey conducted by **Drew University** students for the IFPN, 85% of respondents said they are eating healthier and 75% have increased their knowledge of nutrition since coming to the Pantry. We have heard many stories of people losing weight and generally feeling better. One client stated “*I would never be able to afford these foods at the store. We are all eating healthier since coming to the Pantry.*”

Welcome IFPN Director of Operations



Like many of the people who joined the staff here at the IFPN, **Jon Schenk** began his journey in March 2021 as a volunteer. He was helping with food distribution and in a few other areas when we asked him to assist with our holiday campaign. Realizing Jon had a wealth of experience and a variety of skills, **Carolyn Lake, IFPN’s**

Executive Director, saw this as an opportunity to recruit Jon for a position that was needed for IFPN’s continued growth. Jon was not looking to rejoin the workforce as he was fortunate enough to retire early, however, once he met the IFPN family he was hooked. “*I found myself asking more and more questions and drawn to the IFPN’s mission and journey.*” Prior to his retirement, Jon was the Global Vice President of Care for a Fortune 400 company and also worked as a firefighter/paramedic. He has been married to his wife Gina for almost 30 years. Jon enjoys cooking, traveling, gardening, hiking, and college football. Welcome aboard Jon!

Celebrating The Pantry!

This Fall the IFPN hosted its 23rd annual volunteer recognition event, *Celebrate the Pantry*. It was our second year as a virtual event due to COVID. We honored 46 “staff volunteers” who achieved milestone hour awards. We also gave **Certificate of Appreciation** awards to **St. Hubert’s Animal Welfare Center** who provide our clients with pet food each week, **Liquid Church** who donated 125 baskets full of household supplies for our clients, and **Kimberly Haupt**, a **Drew University** student, who has conducted food drives since the onset of COVID. We also honored **Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel (NDMC) Food Ministry** as our **Golden Apple** recipient. This group was formed at the height of COVID to collect food and help meet the demand of families needing assistance. Recently, the **NDMC Food Ministry** started volunteering in our onsite kitchen making healthy, home cooked meals for our home delivery clients. Our individual **Golden Apple** award for **Volunteer of the Year** was given to **John**



NDMC Food Rescue Ministry receives Golden Apple award. Pictured (l to r), **Kathleen Beck, Patty Gant, Beth Vecchio (Ministry Chair), Mary McGovern (Cooking Coordinator) & Patrice Barry.**



Guarino (pictured left with IFPN’s **Allison Sillence**). John started volunteering in 2019 and has donated over 400 hours. He restocks shelves, helps with bi-weekly Farmers Markets, picks up food from farms, and, this year, managed our garden which produced 500 pounds of fresh produce. Thank you to all our volunteers for your continued support at helping us achieve our mission each day.

Pantry Events

Come Celebrate At Our Annual Spring Gala

BUILDING A FUTURE OF



APRIL 22, 2022



Join the IFPN as we honor

LANGAN

As our Outstanding Service Award Recipient

See Our Insert
For 50/50 Tickets

To find out **How You Can Be A Part Of It All** or **For More Information** please scan our QR code or visit our website at www.mcifp.org/building-a-future-of-hope/



“Clients Helping Clients”



IFPN's German Ortiz with “bonus” bag.

Many IFPN clients find out about our services from the internet or are referred to us by an agency. However, many learn from their neighbors through word of mouth, especially in low-income neighborhoods. We recently began a new program “**Clients Helping Clients**” which is a referral program developed to spread awareness about our Morristown satellite pantry. The program is a

brainchild of client services associate, **German Ortiz**, who realized that there were many families, especially in the immigrant community, who may benefit from our services but aren't aware of us. Each referral brings a “bonus” bag to the referring client which can consist of personal hygiene items, home goods, cleaning products, etc. One recent client, Mariana, was referred to the IFPN by her friend Luz. She is a single mother of two young girls. When she applied to our program Mariana had recently suffered a workplace accident which injured her neck and back. She was out of work for four months and was diagnosed with herniated discs in her neck and lower back. Tests also identified a small tumor in her brain, but her doctors are hopeful that the growth is benign and can be easily treated. Mariana is grateful for the Pantry, her friend Luz's referral, and for the continued support and monthly groceries she receives especially during this very trying time. She commented, *“this has taken one more thing off my plate, I no longer have to worry about how I will feed my daughters.”*

Healthy Choices Reminder: In our efforts to provide a variety of healthy food for our clients, we ask that when donating the following, you consider: canned fruits in its own juice, low sodium canned vegetables, soups, and beans, low fat, shelf stable milk products, and whole grain cereals, pasta, and rice.

Giving Thanks...

We are so grateful for the outpouring of support from our community. Together we had another very successful Thanksgiving program. Nearly 1,800 turkeys with all the trimmings were distributed to Morris County families in need. This was made possible by all the groups who collected food and turkeys, donated funds, and volunteered to pack and distribute the holiday bags. While we can't list everyone in this small space, we do want to call out a few groups that made a significant impact including **Notre Dame of Mt. Carmel Food Rescue Ministry, Morris County Council of Educators Association, Alstede Farms, Morristown Medical Center, Morristown PBA Local 43, Kings Food Markets, Sewa Diwali, Verilli's Bakery, and Wegmans.** A very special shout-out to **Delbarton School**, who collected close to 10,000 pounds of food and \$2,269! We also want to thank those groups who donated labor to pack produce and holiday bags and sort through all the donations including the **Rotary Clubs of Hanover and Morristown, GAF, Langan, Acorn Financial, BASF, McCann Managed Markets, Whippany Actuation Systems and Willis Towers Watson.** Thanks also to the **Junior League of Morristown** for carrying on their annual tradition of cooking meals for our home delivery clients. Special kudos to our dedicated “staff” volunteers and our Board, who were hands-on all season to assist with food sorting and distribution.

Birds of a Feather Run Together

Read Feed Run, the 2021 Annual Turkey Trot 5k, 1mile and Kids Trot was held **in person!** After last year's virtual run, it was especially heartwarming to welcome over 2,200 people, all eager to run, walk or toddle their respective distance, at **Ginty Field** on Thanksgiving. In addition to the warm camaraderie and good vibes that permeated the crisp morning, over \$74,000 was raised to help advance the missions of both the **IFPN and Literacy Volunteers of Morris County.** A very special thank you is extended to our partners at **Atlantic Sports Health**, the official Health Care Sponsor of the Trot, who conducted online training and coaching sessions. We are also grateful to our leadership sponsor **Dixon Energy**, and to our gold sponsors **PBF Energy and Celebrity Motors.** We know turkeys can't fly, but our hearts were soaring! Thanks to all who came to run, volunteer and cheer our athletes on.



Food Drive Honor Roll

Thank you to the students and administrators of all the schools and scout groups who are making a huge difference for our neighbors in need. There were so many who came through for us but we just couldn't list them all.

Time period is September 2021 to December 2021

Madison High School, Madison, 3,127 lbs.; **Cub Scout Pack 233**, Morris Plains, 1,940 lbs. & \$658; **Boy Scout Troop of Boonton**, Boonton, 1,775 lbs.; **Girl Scouts of Northern NJ**, Denville, 1,750 lbs. & \$300; **Red Oaks School**, Morristown, 1,653 lbs.; **Primrose School**, Florham Park, \$1,435; **Frank J. Smith School**, East Hanover, 1,339 lbs.; **Lightbridge Academy**, Whippany, 1,227 lbs.; **Whippany Park High School**, Whippany, 1,217 lbs.; **Peck School**, Morristown, 1,178 lbs. & \$1,940; **Central Middle School**, Parsippany, 1,022 lbs.

Board of Trustees

Meets 7:00pm on third Wednesday of the month

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Jim Silence, mobile program/warehouse support
Bill Zackoff, procurement manager

Our Mission

- ▶ To improve the health and well being of Morris County residents in need by providing access to food, nutrition education and related resources.
- ▶ To provide hands on opportunities for neighbors to help neighbors.
- ▶ To educate the public about the issues of hunger in our area.

Hours

Food Drop-off, Tours & Visitors - Warehouse

2 Executive Drive, Morris Plains

Monday - Thursday 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Special arrangements by request

Food Distribution - Main Pantry/Warehouse

2 Executive Drive, Morris Plains

The First Four Weeks of the Month Only

Monday through Thursday 1pm - 3pm

Wednesday 6pm - 8pm

1st and 3rd Tuesday 6pm - 8pm

Saturday 10am - 12noon

Food Distribution - Satellite Pantry

190 Speedwell Ave., Morristown

Tuesday 9:30am - 12 noon

Wednesday 9:30am - 12 noon

Thursday 9:30am - 12 noon

2nd and 4th Thursday 5pm - 7pm

Calendar

March

3/18 2021 Giving Tree Unveiling

April

4/22 IFPN Annual Spring Gala

May

5/14 Annual Letter Carriers Food Drive (T)

2021 Statistics

Volunteer Hours Donated	18,287
Total Staff & Temp Volunteers	240
Total Lbs. of food distributed	1,615,269
Total Lbs. Fresh Produce	597,540
Total Household Visits	27,124
Mobile Pantry Partners	30

Ways to Give: Why Planned Giving?

Planned giving helps to ensure that the IFPN will meet the needs of our community well into the future and leaves your lasting legacy of caring. Planned gifts take many forms: Bequests, Stock Transfers, IRA Rollover Contributions, Life Insurance, Charitable Remainder Trusts and Gift Annuities. For further info visit <http://mcifp.org/donate/>.

Special Note: When you opt to make a planned gift to the IFPN, we suggest that you seek the counsel of your personal financial advisor, attorney, accountant, banker or insurance professional prior to making the gift.

Interfaith Food Pantry Network
2 Executive Drive
Morris Plains, NJ 07950
Return Service Requested

TOO MUCH MAIL? 

Please let us know if you prefer electronic delivery of our newsletter, or to be removed from our mailing list. Call 973-538-8049 or email interfaithfoodpantry@mcifp.org