

A time of Thanksgiving & a time to help a neighbor

Thanksgiving has always been a special time around our house. Food, family, fellowship, laughter, football, and gratitude fills our home and has for as long as I can remember. Even during lean times, we always have our family and can depend on them. Meeting folks who use the pantries, this is often not the case.

Take Sandy for example (not her real name). We met Sandy at a pantry a few days after she had transplant surgery. The world had not dealt Sandy a good situation and she conveyed that her choices were not always the best either. She was in route to her job in fast food and was at the pantry grabbing something for dinner that evening after work. You see, Sandy couldn't afford to comply with her doctor's orders to stay in the hospital for several more days of recovery. Rent was coming due, and bills were piling up.

Sandy represents an increasing number of neighbors who live in Hamilton County on their own. Neighbors who don't have local family. They live their lives alone without a support system. Meanwhile, some area neighbors are oblivious to the challenges that exist for so many county residents. As the winter sets in, along with rising costs, an increasing number of our neighbors



can use a hand up. So, what's your point? In the spirit of Thanksgiving, be thankful and help a neighbor. Thankful for all that we have and all the people in our lives. Thankful that on average we will consume 3,000 calories and 229 grams of fat for our Thanksgiving dinner: one-third more than the recommended daily calorie intake.

That data gives me such tremendous perspective. How about instead of stopping for that \$6 low-fat vanilla latte or the \$12 cigar, I hit the pause button and consider repurposing that purchase to help a neighbor? Six bucks buys lots of veggies and protein – \$12, even more. Especially in a time of Thanksgiving, reflect for a moment and consider those that with a small sacrifice you can help.

I guarantee you, the benefit from helping a neighbor will outlast the benefit of that purchase.

With over 27,000 food-challenged neighbors in Hamilton County, **FeedingTeam.org** is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that provides outdoor 24/7/365 no-questions-asked free food pantries throughout the county.

The pantries exist to meet the food insecurity needs of gap families, neighbors who may not qualify for public

FeedingTeam.org
Facts
 49 pantries
 8,500 meals in July 2022
 Over 30 volunteer families

assistance and could use a few meals before payday. The pantries serve as many food-challenged neighbors as possible, and our hearts are with those who, like my family, could not always make ends meet.

Thank you for embracing the pantries. We love serving with so many neighbors across Hamilton County. In future columns, we will share more stories about how your generosity served neighbors in times of need. The face of hunger in Hamilton County is not what you may think.

In practical terms, this straightforward way to help neighbors is having real impact on lives, families, and our communities. Thank you. A few meals can change the course of a person's life. A can of green beans means so much more when you have nothing to feed your kids.

Would you like to get involved? Volunteer opportunities are available. We are evaluating new pantry locations. If you think you have a potential location, please contact us.

Mark and Lisa Hall are the Founders of Feeding Team. They may be reached at lisa@feedingteam.org and mark@feedingteam.org or by calling (317) 832-1104.