

Spring 2019

**COMMUNITY**  
**FOOD** WAREHOUSE  
OF MERCER COUNTY

**Feeding  
Hope News**

***Feed Our Valley***

***Agency Spotlight***

***2018 In Review***



Dear Friends,

Well we are on our way to a very anticipated spring season! I don't know about you, but I am ready to be done with cold, wind and snow! Warmth, flowers and longer days are in the wings!

Our last few months at the CFWMC have been exciting and challenging – for different reasons. Exciting in that we are receiving the USDA Trade Mitigation commodities in abundance – frozen strawberries and blueberries, fresh oranges, pears and sweet potatoes and fresh milk - to name a few! Our agencies have been able to distribute these products to their clients and all have been well received. Primary Health and the Mercer County Housing Authority have partnered with us to help set up mobile distribution sites throughout Mercer County. I have been able to personally meet with some of the folks who are benefiting from these drop sites and I can tell you that they are extremely thankful!

We have had challenging times because of the government shutdown which has affected Snap recipients throughout the nation! Over 18,000 individuals are eligible for SNAP benefits in Mercer County. The CFWMC continues to remain vigilant in serving the food insecure in our county and in our advocacy efforts by contacting our federal and state legislators about the plight of those who receive these benefits. Also affected were our government workers who seemed to weather the storm with true grit. We stand ready to assist them as well.

It is that time of year for our spring fundraising campaign **“Starve Hunger – Feed Hope”** which begins April 1<sup>st</sup> and runs through the end of May. We hope you will consider donating!

We have some exciting news! We are launching a new logo with this issue! This newsletter is your introduction to something that we have been working on for quite some time. We wanted to accurately convey just what we are all about. As you can see, the color has been changed to Orange and Green. These colors coincide with the Feeding America (the national organization of food banks of which we are a member) logo. Orange is the universal color for hunger. We did carry over the “wheat” symbol but just updated its look. It is our hope that this new logo will be a true symbol of our mission to feed the hungry in Mercer County!

Thank you to all our friends, donors and volunteers! We appreciate every dollar, hour and kind word!

Happy Spring!

Lori



**Executive Director**  
Lori Weston

**Board President**

Dr. Joan Humphrey, Penn State  
Shenango

**Vice President**

Gino Nicasro, Allstate Insurance

**Secretary**

Connie Gerba, Gilbert's Insurance

**Treasurer**

Gary Rose, Retired Chief Financial  
Officer, Goldstein's Furniture

**Board Members**

Rich Banks, Giant Eagle  
Jacque Beck, SCP Group  
Gary Dalessandro, JFS Wealth  
Advisors  
Susan Ference, Walmart  
Jennifer Bell, F.N.B. Wealth  
Management  
Carole Gioski, Greenville Savings  
Bank  
Dr. Glenn Hink, Senior Pastor, First  
Presbyterian Church of Sharon  
Dr. Galen Hurl, Principled  
Chiropractic  
Michael Joanow, Attorney, Joanow  
Legal Group  
Gwen Martino, Retired Special  
Education Teacher, Warren City  
Schools  
Madge Tamber, Retired Family and  
Consumer Science Teacher, Grove City  
High School

## Feed Our Valley with Dallas Hartman Jr. and WFMJ

We would like to thank Attorney Dallas Hartman Jr. for sponsoring the Community Food Warehouse on WFMJ's Feed Our Valley in 2019. Atty. Hartman will be doing a series of promotional spots to highlight our food bank's program needs, annual campaigns and special events with a call to action from viewers on the Pennsylvania side! Thank you, Dallas!



WFMJ crew and producers look on as Dallas and Lori film a promo.



Mimi and Lori pose with Dallas Hartman Jr. out in the Warehouse, during a break from filming promos.

## TRADE MITIGATION FOOD PURCHASES

The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced last July that they will be buying up to \$1.2 billion in food that would have normally been exported through trade with other countries. Due to the stance that the "US farmers and agricultural producers were being unfairly treated by China's illegal trading practices" (US Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue), the USDA has implemented a short-term solution over a two-year period. The products purchased during this time are being distributed by food banks and other nonprofit feeding programs. The CFWMC is part of this distribution process. To date, we have received milk, fresh oranges, fresh sweet potatoes, frozen strawberries, kidney beans and fresh pears. Still to come are fresh milk, pork, cheese, walnuts, hams and more! We are very excited to be able to bring these welcome items to our food insecure neighbors in Mercer County.

## It's Your Legacy - You Have Options

Planned gifts can help you make a meaningful contribution to ending hunger in your community. Here is some advice on planned giving and charitable deductions.

Most of you know a direct donation to your favorite charity is the simplest way to receive a charitable tax deduction. However, many less well-known ways can also help you donate to a charity in a tax deductible way. Here are several creative ways donors have available to gift to charity.

1. **Charitable Lead Trust** – Pays an annuity directly to a charity named by you for a specified period or for life. At the end of the period specified, the remaining principal is returned to you or someone you name as the residual beneficiary.
2. **Charitable Remainder Trust** – Is the opposite of a Charitable Lead Trust. This kind of charitable trust makes an annuity payment to you or to anyone you name for a specified period (which could be for the rest of your life) then pays any remaining principal directly to a charity (or charities) named by you.
3. **Donor Advised Fund** – Is a fund set up that allows you to make a large donation in one year and then "advise" the custodian regarding which qualified charities you want to contribute to each year. The new 2018 tax law has renewed interest in Donor Advised Funds because it allows donors to effectively bunch donations into one year allowing a tax deduction that may have been lost due to the increased standard deduction.
4. **Private Foundation** – Is similar to the Donor Advised Fund, however it is usually more cumbersome to operate (i.e. more red tape) and therefore, is more expensive. For these reasons a Private Foundation is usually only recommended if a donor has a substantial amount set aside or earmarked for charities while a Donor Advised Fund can usually be set up for as little as \$5,000.

There is also a simple strategy for those who are older than age 70-1/2 and are required to take annual taxable distributions from their IRA. These donors are permitted to direct up to \$100,000 per year from their IRA to a qualified charity without paying tax on the distributions. This strategy works well if your total itemized deductions do not exceed the standard deduction. To qualify, the transfer must be made directly from an IRA to a qualified public charity (transfers to Donor Advised Funds or Private Foundations do not qualify).

Another popular strategy is to remember a charity in your will. This works well if you are not sure you will have anything left when life ends. For those who are fortunate enough to know that they will never run out of money, giving while alive will not only allow you to witness the benefits of your generosity, it also provides the charity an opportunity to acknowledge your kindness and to thank you in person.

Finally, the Community Food Warehouse and the Community Foundation of Western PA and Eastern Ohio are both qualified charities that can help you implement any of these giving strategies.

Contributed by: Gary Dalessandro, Principal, Wealth Management Specialist at JFS Wealth Advisors and member of the CFWMC Board of Directors

# Agency Spotlight: Valley Baptist Church Food Pantry

For this edition's agency spotlight, our previous intern, Emma Messet, reached out to Mavis Shannon, of Valley Baptist Church (VBC) Food Pantry in Farrell, PA. VBC Food Pantry operates out of the lower level of the church and distributes on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of each month. They also serve as an emergency pantry on an as-needed basis.

The volunteers at VBC Food Pantry are very friendly and welcoming. There is a true sense of hospitality as clients filter in and out on distribution days. Below are the highlights from our conversation with Mavis to learn more about the pantry at VBC and its vital role in our community:

## How many families do you serve a month, on average?

We usually serve between 80-100 families per month. However, we do not always have the same clients. Clients will often come more sporadically throughout the year rather than regularly each month. The timing of SNAP benefits and other factors can influence their need and use of the pantry.

## How is the leadership of your organization structured? Are there any particular groups or that constitute the bulk of your volunteers?

Our organization is run solely by volunteers. The pantry committee is made up of Valley Baptist Church members. Volunteers that help out with the physical operations include students from Farrell schools and senior citizens in the community as needed.

## How long have you been the director of VBC Food Pantry?

After undergoing a heart transplant that did not allow me to return to work, I started VBC Food Pantry from the ground up. We will be celebrating our 5-year anniversary in March.

## What motivates you to be the director of VBC Food Pantry and serve your community?

There is a need. With experience running a food pantry prior to VBC, I have come to realize that others do not fully understand the need. Cars and houses are not an accurate measure of an individual's financial security, because they could "have those assets today and not have them tonight" due to unforeseen medical bills, job loss, and other circumstances that can change at a moment's notice.

## What are your agency's goals for the future?

Since the church graciously allows us to use this facility, we are looking to write grant proposals for energy efficient freezers and refrigerators. We would also like to invest in new shelving for our inventory.

## How has being a member agency of the Community Food Warehouse helped you?

We have been able to feed many more people since we are able to purchase food at low cost from the Warehouse. Being able to feed more allows us to give more back to our neighbors in need. We can service families more effectively because we can get food with nutritional value from the Warehouse and this allows our clients to create full meals with what they receive at the pantry. Additionally, the employees at the Warehouse are always very helpful when I call in with questions.

## Is there anything else you would like people to know about VBC food pantry?

An individual or family in need does not have to be a member of the church to receive food from our pantry. As long as they are a resident of Mercer County, they can come to us for food and their visits will be kept strictly confidential. No one will ever be turned away from our pantry. The church motto is that "life can and will be changed," and the pantry is part of this change. Also, a new feature we have added is distributing recipes that teach people how to cook the food they receive at the pantry. We have a lot of good cooks here at VBC that are providing the recipes!



VBC Food Pantry Shelves



Mavis with VBC's Pastor  
T. James Harrison.



Mavis instructs volunteers from Farrell High  
School, who help her to set up the pantry for give  
out days.



The outside of Valley Baptist Church.



The pantry set up for their give  
out day at the end of February.



**Military Share Program**

**432** boxes distributed  
**30** families  
**13,196** total pounds of food

**Mission Statement**

The mission of the Community Food Warehouse is to provide supplemental food to those who are hungry and to raise awareness of hunger throughout Mercer County.



**Produce**

**152,671** Pounds distributed

Apples, cabbage, carrots, onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and squash made up almost half of that.



**Media**

**19** local news appearances/promos



**20** articles, mentions, or pictures in local print media



**Food Drives**

**54,323**  
pounds of food donated this year

**44,036**  
pounds of food donated in 2017



**Charitable Milk Program**

**14,287**  
1/2 gallons distributed to families in need in 2018

**11,075**  
1/2 gallons distributed in 2017

**6,189** hours



**772** volunteers



**\$152,806**

(in equivalent paid time)



**\$22,988**

*35th Anniversary Campaign*



**\$89,850**

*2018 Each One, Feed One Holiday Campaign*



**BackPack Program**

**31,450** bags distributed in 2018

**850** students in the program

**18** individual schools

**9** school districts



**Senior Food Box Program**

**4,596** boxes distributed

**26** distribution sites

**102** volunteers

**730** hours