

# St. George Food Pantry

## *We Feed His Sheep*

### Letter from the Director



One of the more recent comments I heard about the St. George Food Pantry (SGFP) was, “so many people work together to make things happen.” Coming together is the hallmark of the SGFP. Let me give you some

examples: Maddie, painting the entire client area with her family and friends for her senior high school capstone project. Jerri, who designs and makes greeting cards, will send Christmas cards to our donors. Other Food Pantry Directors sharing stories and their ideas to support one another. UC students and local restaurant owners dropping off food after

campus events. Men and women who come every Wednesday morning to sort donated food and stock shelves. Members of Day Programs for adults with mental challenges come to SGFP and bag a variety of items including donuts and diapers. It’s a lot of people from many different backgrounds working together to “make a difference” - and they do!

## Pantry Updates

### New Floor & Desks:

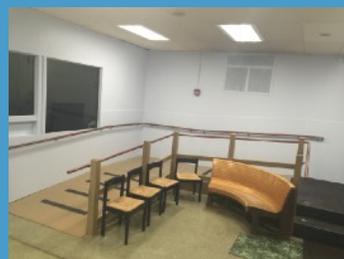


Maddie Cimorell, a senior at Mount Notre Dame High School, has been coming to the food pantry for the past six years with her family to volunteer for the Christmas celebration.

“I always look forward to going because I love working with my cousins and picking out gifts for families and finding super cool toys for the kids,” said Maddie. “My favorite part is walking a bag full of presents into the main room and seeing the reactions of those who are on the receiving end of my gift choices.”

When Maddie was assigned a senior project she immediately thought of the pantry and wanted to help it grow even more. She put in a lot of hard work planning, painting, and was instrumental in getting the food pantry a new floor and desks, which will be installed soon. “It was a lot of hard work and planning but I think everything has paid off and I hope that everyone else will enjoy the changes!” said Maddie.

Thank you Maddie! Clients and volunteers appreciate your dedication to the pantry.



### New Ramp:

The ramp at the entrance of the pantry helps bring numerous carts of food into the pantry throughout the year. It also helps make entering and exiting the pantry easier for our volunteers and clients.

The ramp was refurbished this fall and it is now wider and more user-friendly.

For more St. George Food Pantry updates, please visit our website:

<http://www.stgeorgefoodpantry.com/news>



## Volunteer Spotlight:

### Jolene Struebbe & Jim Miller

*How did you learn about the pantry and how long have you been serving at the pantry?*

Jolene: “I learned about and have been part of the food pantry since I was a graduate student at U.C. from 1982 to 1984. Over the past 30 years I have been involved to different degrees. When our son was young, I remember coming on Thursday afternoons with him. This would've been 1989-ish. Then we had twins in 1990 so I don't think we were very involved for a while. Mid '90s found us back at the pantry. It's hard to remember, but I think both Jim and I have been consistent volunteers probably for the past 5 to 10 years on Tuesday nights. When our grown children are in town, they often are recruited to return to the pantry as well.”

Jim: “As Jolene notes, she has been involved in the pantry for years, so I first learned about it from her. I've been working at the pantry with Jolene for at least 5 years, although it probably is longer. As you can probably tell, Jolene is passionate about both food and helping people. My interest in the pantry is really driven by food as a right that everyone should have access to. In addition to the food pantry, I also volunteer at the FreeStore Foodbank as the volunteer coordinator for our church. Again, for me, this work is about providing access to food as a basic right.”

*What is your favorite part about working at the pantry?*

Jolene: “One of my favorite parts about working at the pantry is seeing clients that have been with the pantry so very long. I worry about them when we don't see them and hope that things have improved for them. It's like an extended family. I'm somewhat of a chatterbox so I tend to know people pretty well, getting to know our clients' new family members and passing of their older family members. It is important to me that I know each client as a person, as an individual and I do my best to get to know their story. I have had clients share intimate details of their past, tell me of horrible medical conditions and deplorable living conditions, give me hugs and tried to sneak a kiss on the way out the door. Then they come back the next month and give me the update. They ask about my dogs, which often accompany me to the pantry, and we share a history together. The worst part for me about working at the pantry is when you have people that you've known for a long time and then they stop coming. And you don't know what happened. I can think of several people right now that I wish I knew what happened.”

“We see more and more grandparents taking on responsibility for grandchildren. It seems like a generation of people has gone missing. We used to hear that people were incarcerated and now they are just on the streets with drugs. That is heartbreaking.”

Jim: “My favorite part about working at the pantry is developing relationships with people and engaging with them beyond simply handing them food every two weeks. As I develop relationships with people, I come to look forward to seeing them every two weeks and understanding how their life is progressing. By understanding more about their lives, I also think I can serve them better. My other favorite thing is experiencing the true appreciation these people have for the impact the pantry is making in their lives.”

*Do you have a favorite memory during your time at the pantry?*

Jolene: “All of our family members like to share their gently used clothes, household items etc. with the customers at the food

pantry. I guess one of my favorite memories is when we had a client who came in who is roughly the size of my husband. I asked him if he could use a few new shirts. He was so excited. He has come back in many times sometimes wearing the shirts, sometimes not and has never forgotten that I singled him out, and maybe made him feel special for a while, by giving him my husband shirts. I can still see the sparkle in his eyes.”

Jim: “My favorite memory relates to getting to know people and looking forward to seeing them at the pantry. For many years, there was a patron named George who would come in every two weeks like clockwork. Over the years I learned about his interests and hobbies, and certainly about some of his very unique food preferences. It got to the point where he would come up to the window and I would hand him his specially "prepared" bag, and he was so appreciative of how much unique care we were giving him. At one point, George stopped coming to the pantry and every two weeks we would always wonder where he was and what he was doing. We even talked about calling him or going by his house to check on him. After a few months of these "where's George" discussions, we were about to close for the night and all of a sudden George walks in the door. Although he acted like he had never missed a visit, we all reacted like our best friend in the world had returned from a long journey. It was so great to see him again, and it was clear that he was overjoyed by our welcome.”

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