



North Liberty Community Food and Clothing Pantry 2006 Program Summary

Our mission:

The North Liberty Community Food and Clothing Pantry exists to engage our community in feeding and clothing our neighbors.

Accomplishments in 2006:

The pantry has experienced rapid growth in 2006 and has made a number of significant changes. We have moved to a new method of food distribution, expanded our programming, enhanced our administrative capabilities, and substantially increased our funding. We continue to focus on providing a warm and welcoming place for those who need our services and on involving the community in serving our neighbors.

The pantry served 350 families in 2006. We saw a wide variety of families and individuals, who varied in age from less than a year to 84. Families with children accounted for 70% of those served. These families and individuals made a total of 2202 visits to the pantry, which was 23% more than in 2005. The pantry gave out more than 25 tons of food and 4900 pieces of clothing in 2006. More than half of the food was purchased through the HACAP Food Reservoir or local wholesalers, and the rest was donated. Cost of the purchased food was \$6804. Most clothing items were donated, with only \$1078 spent on purchased clothing, primarily children's underwear for the socks and underwear program described below.

A major advance for the pantry this year has been our change from providing sacked food for families to inviting families to choose their own food. This change to shopping empowers families to select food they want and increases the probability that the food will be used. Both volunteers and families have been very happy with the change. We offer shopping only to North Liberty and nearby rural residents. We have seen a substantial increase in number of visits by North Liberty families since we changed to shopping and are unable to accommodate the increase in visits we would anticipate were we to expand the program to include residents of Coralville and Iowa City.

The pantry has initiated two new components to our services. Our recipe program provides families with simple recipes that use ingredients available in the pantry. We also responded to requests for children's socks and underwear with a special distribution of purchased items. Both these programs have been very well received.

We have also encouraged the involvement of the community through fundraising and food drives. We have had financial and in-kind donations from 38 local businesses, schools, and service groups. We conduct an annual Neighborhood Challenge Food Drive when neighborhoods compete to see which can raise the most food. We also sponsored a Teen Band Challenge designating food items as admission to the concert. We work with the North Liberty Family Resource Center, located at our local elementary schools, to provide assistance to families who ask the center for help with food and clothing, and we are active in the North Liberty Unity Coalition, in which a number of community agencies and groups seek to provide opportunities for the healthy growth and development of citizens in our community.

We greatly increased the money available to purchase food for the year in order to keep up with expanding need. We have been able to purchase new shelving and a commercial freezer, which allows us to accept more donations of frozen food, providing better nutrition and more desirable selections. Funding increases were made possible by several generous donations from local individuals, businesses, and organizations and support from the City of North Liberty and several small grants.

As the pantry grows, we have noted a need for increased administration and infrastructure. To help with these needs, we obtained a Compassion Iowa grant that provides funds for training, consulting, and office equipment. We have established a formal bookkeeping system and a formal board of directors. We have also begun to provide monthly in-service trainings for current volunteers.

Our program:

The pantry is an outreach ministry of the North Liberty First United Methodist Church, but the service area and support are community wide. Although our primary focus is North Liberty and surrounding rural areas, anyone in Johnson County can access our resources. The pantry was created in 1985 as a response to requests from families in need in our community. Until 2004 the pantry was a small project that each month served 15 to 20 families who asked for help. In response to a growing community and growing need, the pantry was expanded in 2004 and has seen rapid growth as a result of three factors: increasing awareness of the pantry, increasing population growth in North Liberty, and increasing economic need.

The pantry is now open to the public three days each week for a total of 10 hours. Anyone can come once a week during those hours to receive food and clothing. There are no restrictions on families who can receive food and clothing, with the exception of government commodities, which cannot be given to families above 185% of poverty. We provide thoughtful and caring service to the families we serve and have consistently drawn praise from those families, as well as from groups and individuals who assist us.

All staff are volunteers from the North Liberty area, who bring a variety of talents to the management and operation of the pantry. Volunteers are staffing the four pantry shifts each week and are also involved in collecting food, stocking the pantry, and doing administrative and support. We have about 60 regular volunteers, who contributed over 4800 hours in the last year. In addition, another 50-75 volunteers participated in special activities, such as food drives and building construction.

We seek to involve the families we serve in the pantry. Families often bring us clothing donations, and several have helped us on an informal basis when they come to the pantry. We have recently recruited families to participate as volunteers and serve on our board of directors.

Future plans:

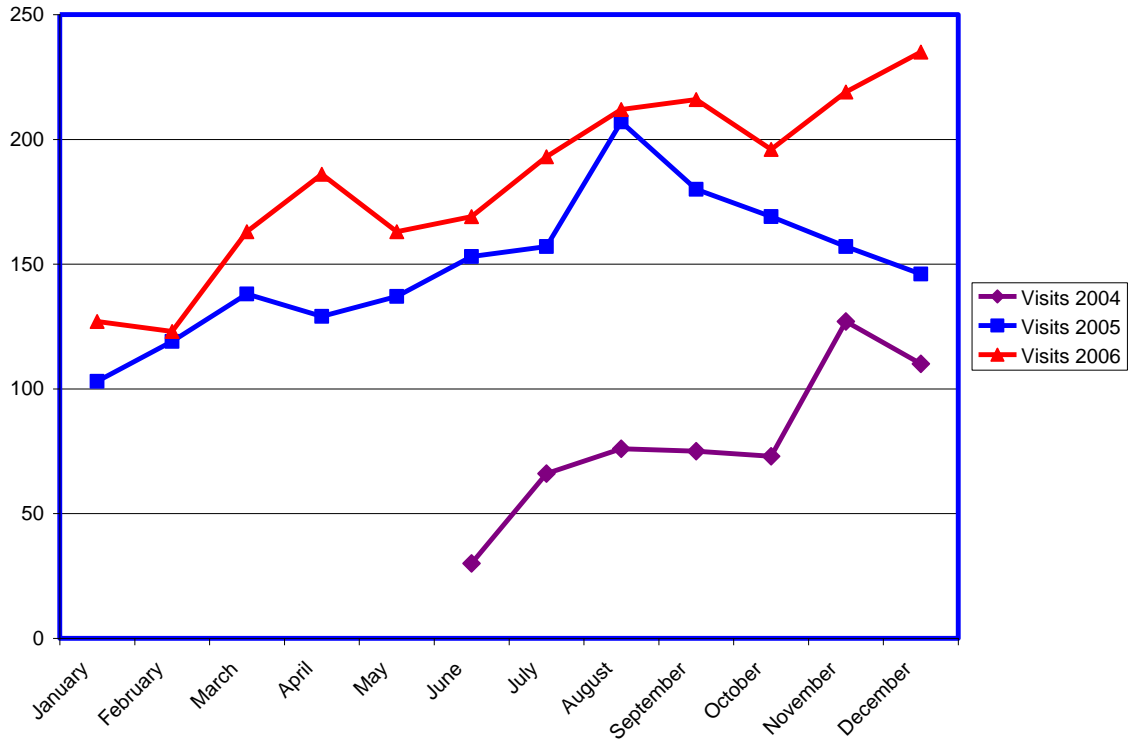
North Liberty is a rapidly growing community. U S Census figures show an increase from 5,367 residents in 2000 to 8,808 in 2005. A substantial number of families are in economic need. Projections based on 2000 poverty statistics indicate that there are currently nearly 500 residents whose incomes are below the poverty level and over 1400 residents who are below 185% of poverty, a level of income resulting in less than \$30,000 annually for a family of four. North Liberty has a substantial amount of affordable housing in the form of subsidized apartments and mobile homes. However, it has very little assistance for low-income families. The North Liberty Family Resource Center, a WIC representative, and the pantry are the only organizations located in North Liberty that specifically serve low-income residents. All other services must be accessed in Iowa City. This is made particularly difficult by the very limited public transportation between the two cities.

Our pantry is currently serving 350 families. Given the number of families in need in our community, we see no reason to expect any decrease in the continuing growth of the pantry. With the past increase in visits and the expectation of continued need, we are experiencing stress on our facility. We often exceed our storage space and are forced to store food or clothing in other locations. We also experience crowding in the pantry during the times we are open to the public. The pantry has accommodated a ten-fold increase in requests for help through creative efforts, openness to change, and careful use of funds, but we must continue to increase our funding in order to cope with growth.

We have developed a plan for expanding our capacity. In the short term we have increased the number of hours we are open from 8 to 10 and recruited more volunteers to staff these open hours. In the long term we have created the initial plans for a building addition and are seeking funding sources for that expansion.

As a part of our enhancement of pantry infrastructure, we are planning to add paid staff to coordinate the pantry. Program administration is currently facilitated by a coordinator, who is a volunteer, and by volunteers serving on four committees. The addition of a paid staff member will increase consistency and continuity for the program and allow for expanded services. We are actively seeking funding for staff.

Visits to the Pantry



Population of North Liberty 2000-2005 (U. S. Census figures)

Date	Population
July 1, 2005	8,808
July 1, 2004	7,638
July 1, 2003	6,866
July 1, 2002	6,274
July 1, 2001	5,966
July 1, 2000	5,494
April 1, 2000 (Census 2000)	5,367

Sources of funding

Source	2005	2006
Business Contributions	\$560.00	\$4,050.00
Church Contributions	\$225.50	\$607.50
Fundraisers	\$511.00	\$323.30
Government Contributions	\$0.00	\$2,500.00
Grants	\$2,261.00	\$9,871.00
Group Contributions	\$50.00	\$1,627.80
Individual Contributions		
Outside Church	\$880.00	\$751.00
Within Church	\$1,827.60	\$2,135.00
Miscellaneous	\$40.00	\$58.89
Total	\$6,355.10	\$21,924.49

Cost of services

Service	2006
Food costs per pound	\$0.14
Food costs per visit	\$3.09
Clothing costs per item	\$0.22
Total cost per visit	\$10.42
Total cost per family	\$65.53