



## **North Liberty Community Food and Clothing Pantry 2007 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 2007:**

The amount of services provided by the pantry grew significantly in 2007. This growth has prompted policy changes and growth in budget and staffing. We are focusing on North Liberty and rural Johnson County and reducing our services to Iowa City and Coralville. We will be adding a half-time coordinator in January, our first paid staff position, and have increased our volunteer base by 30%. 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 428 families in 2007. We saw a wide variety of families and individuals, who varied in age from less than a year to 87. Families with children accounted for 65% of those served. Results from our family survey indicate that 74% of families are white, 18% black, and 10% Native American, Hispanic, or mixed race. In 72% of families at least one person is employed. In 24% at least one person is disabled. These families and individuals made a total of 3151 visits to the pantry, which was 43% more than in 2006. The pantry gave out more than 75,000 pounds of food and 7700 pieces of clothing in 2007. Most clothing items were donated, with only \$625 spent on purchased clothing, primarily children's underwear for the socks and underwear program and children's coats.

Our shopping program, which allows families to choose their own food, proved very popular this year. The rate of growth in number of visits exceeded 50% by June. This rapid growth put a strain on staff, facilities, and food. As a result, we decided to modify the program and limit our service area. We limited new families to those from North Liberty and rural Johnson County and referred new Iowa City and Coralville families to Crisis Center in Iowa City. We eliminated our dual system and allowed all eligible families to participate in shopping. This had the desired result of reducing the number of visits while enhancing service for the families we serve. It has also increased the sense of community within the volunteers and families as we see more people from the immediate area.

The community continues to be very supportive of the pantry. We have increased visibility in several ways. We had our first Chef's Challenge fundraising dinner, conducted our annual Neighborhood Challenge Food Drive, initiated direct mail requests to businesses, and ran a public service announcement on local TV. As awareness has grown, we have seen an increase in food donations. Large and small food drives and individual donations accounted for 17,400 pounds of food through the year. Food donated by businesses contributed another 11,700 pounds. The remaining 46,000 pounds of food was purchased, primarily from the HACAP Food Reservoir. Cost of the purchased food was \$7341. Increasing donations and inexpensive food from HACAP have allowed us to keep our costs down, even in the face of a greater number of visits.

The pantry continues to collaborate with the North Liberty Family Resource Center through mutual referrals and sharing of food and clothing resources. We have also continued our participation in North Liberty Unity Coalition and again supported their summer picnic program for the community.

Even though the amount of food and clothing distributed grew dramatically, increases in food and clothing donations have allowed the pantry to keep costs down. The amount of food donated by individual and group donations increased by 100%, and the amount donated by businesses increased by 140%. Clothing donations from businesses, groups and individuals were up 55%.

The pantry has maintained the quality of interaction with families, despite the rapid growth. The family survey conducted at the end of the year showed that families continue to be happy with services. Families were particularly pleased with the friendly helpful attitude of volunteers, the opportunity to shop, and the convenience of a pantry close to their home.

Increased activity in the pantry and an increasing number of volunteers has required additional administrative support. The board of directors, formed late in 2006, meets monthly and has addressed and resolved a number of issues. They decided to hire a half-time paid coordinator beginning in January 2008. The addition of a paid staff member will increase consistency and continuity for the program and allow for expanded services and allow the previous coordinator to focus on volunteer training, mentoring and support

### **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. Our primary focus is North Liberty and surrounding rural areas of Johnson County. Limited services are available for Coralville and Iowa City residents. 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.

The pantry has added a half-time paid coordinator. All other 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 80 regular volunteers, who contributed over 3400 hours in the last year. In addition, another 50-75 volunteers participated in special activities, such as food drives and fundraisers.

We seek to involve the families we serve in the pantry. We have had two new consumer volunteers this year. Families also bring us clothing donations, and several have helped us on an informal basis when they come to the pantry.

### **Future plans:**

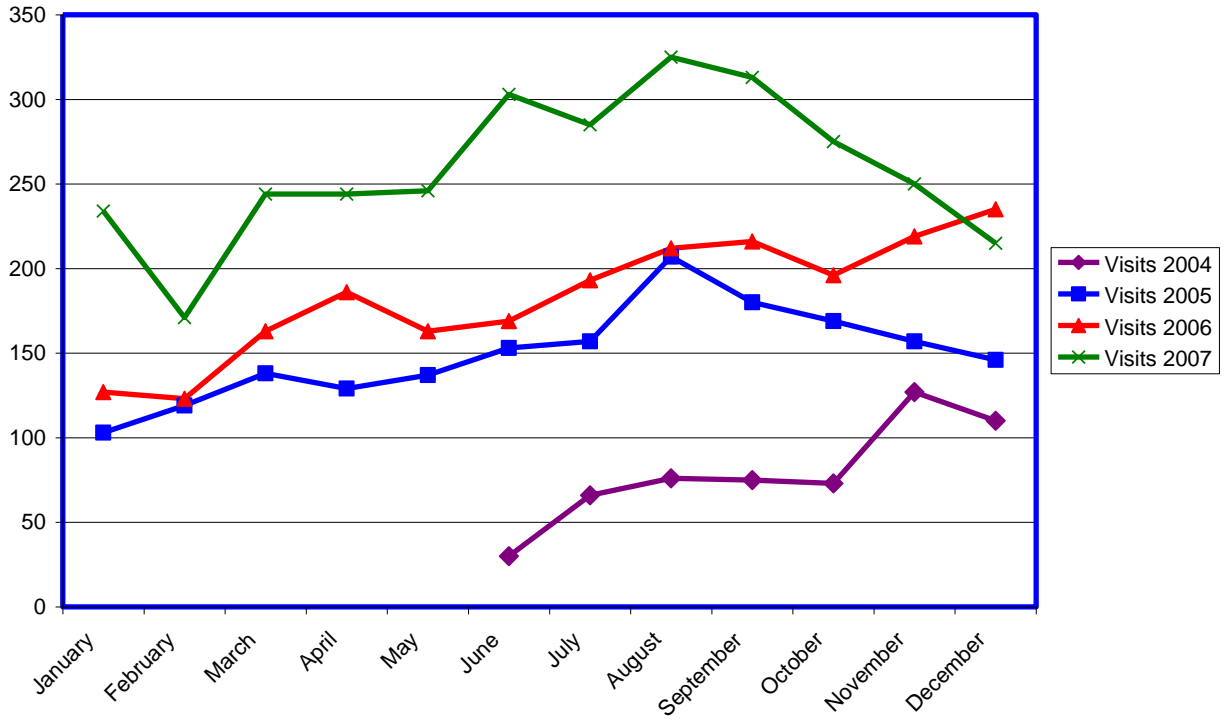
North Liberty is a rapidly growing community. U S Census figures show an increase from 5,367 residents in 2000 to 8,808 in 2005. A substantial number of families are in economic need. Projections based on 2000 poverty statistics indicate that there are currently nearly 500 residents whose incomes are below the poverty level and over 1400 residents who are below 185% of poverty, a level of income of \$38,000 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. Many of the families who come to the pantry do not have reliable transportation. In our family survey, 44% of respondents indicated that they walk or get a ride to the pantry.

Our pantry is currently serving 428 families. The pantry is working to serve all of the families in need in our community while maintaining enough resources to be able to serve everyone well. 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 adjusting to a continuing 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 will continue to make adjustments to expand our capacity. We are evaluated increasing our open hours. We are also seeking out funding for additional on-site storage. In the long-term we will be seeking out funding for a building expansion.

We have added a half-time paid staff to coordinate the pantry. The Pantry Coordinator will be able to work with pantry committees and volunteers in order to maintain consistency and expand services. We have received staff funding support from the community and the First United Methodist Church. We are actively seeking additional 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

<b>Source</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Business Contributions	\$4,050.00	\$908.00
Church Contributions	\$607.50	\$2943.53
Fundraisers	\$323.30	\$1,412.00
Grants	\$9,871.00	\$4412.00
Local Government	\$4000.00	\$5,000.00
Group Contributions	\$1,627.80	\$3300.00
Individual Contributions		
Outside Church	\$751.00	\$2612.00
Within Church	\$2,135.00	\$818.30
Miscellaneous	\$209.83	\$21.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$23,575.43</b>	<b>\$21,432.40</b>

### Cost of services

<b>Service</b>	<b>2007</b>
Food costs per pound	\$0.10
Food costs per visit	\$2.34
Clothing costs per item	\$0.08
Total cost per visit	\$4.55
Total cost per family	33.48