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Gladstone Food Pantry to close

After serving hundreds of local families since fall 2014, the Gladstone Food Pantry will end operations this summer. June 16 will be the last day customers can get free food at the site.

Run by a team of 55 volunteers, the pantry behind Gladstone High School has given families the opportunity to choose free produce, meat, canned goods, milk, and more. The first quarter of 2018, the pantry provided food to 708 people, 39 percent of them children and 16 percent seniors.

Partners in the project included the Oregon Food Bank, Bob's Red Mill, Dave's Killer Bread, and grant funders Clackamas County and the Gladstone Education Foundation.

"Gladstone Schools started the pantry because we know reliable access to food stabilizes struggling families and helps our students learn better," said program leader Leslie Robinette. "However, as schools again face funding cuts, the sad reality is that we can no longer afford this program."

The school district hopes that by fall or winter it will find a government, non-profit, or corporate partner to provide the funds needed to reopen the pantry. Until then, schools will refer families to food resources in nearby communities.

PHOTO: Gladstone Food Pantry volunteer Colton Wilson [right] helps a customer choose foods for his family. Open since fall 2014, the pantry will close June 16 due to school funding cuts.