

NR 080118

Gladstone Food Pantry to reopen August 16

After closing June 16 due to school district funding cuts, the Gladstone Food Pantry will reopen under volunteer leadership on August 16. Since 2014, the pantry has served more than 7,000 people per year. Over 35 percent are children or teens, and 23 percent are seniors.

"I've been volunteering at the food pantry for 3 years," said co-leader Ruthann Aurentz. "During that time, our volunteers and clients became a family, so we were sad when we had to close in June. We've worked hard to reorganize, and I'm delighted we can reopen so soon. I can't wait to see my old friends!"

The pantry is located on the Gladstone High School campus off Nelson Lane. Starting August 16 it will open to customers Thursdays from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon.

Through partnerships with the Oregon Food Bank, Bob's Red Mill, and Dave's Killer Bread, the pantry will again provide a shopping experience where families can choose produce, meat, frozen foods, bread, milk, and canned goods to meet their needs. More than 55 volunteers are regular contributors to the project.

We live in the most prosperous country in the world. There is no reason why people should go hungry here," said co-leader Alex Van Pelt. "I volunteer at the pantry because I can help my neighbors facing food insecurity get access to healthy foods. I volunteer with my children because I want them to have compassion for others. The best part is seeing the wonderful people who come in and their smiling faces when they leave."

Community members are working to raise \$25,000 needed to hire a part time manager. Tax-deductible contributions can be sent to the Gladstone Education Foundation, 17789 Webster Road, Gladstone, OR 97027. [Indicate "Food Pantry" on the subject line.]

Those wishing to tour the facility, to donate, or to volunteer are invited to an Open House on August 18 from 12:30 to 1:30. For more information about the pantry, call 503-496-3947.

PHOTO: Gladstone Food Pantry volunteer Judy Nelson [left] helps a customer choose bread.

PHOTO: A shopper works with food pantry volunteer Colton Wilson [right] to choose a variety of nutritious foods. Wilson is a 7th grader at Kraxberger Middle School.