

Gladstone Food Pantry secures funding for next year and beyond

After closing for two months due to school district funding cuts, the Gladstone Food Pantry reopened in August under the temporary leadership of volunteers Ruthann Aurentz and Alex Van Pelt. Now, thanks to grants and donations, the pantry has the funds it needs to hire a part time manager for the 70-volunteer operation beginning this winter in partnership with Northwest Family Services.

Funds for the project include a \$15,000 grant from Clackamas County, a \$5,000 grant from Bob’s Red Mill Natural Foods, and over a dozen substantial contributions from local businesses and individuals.

Gladstone Schools provides a site for the pantry on the Gladstone High School campus. They also cover utility costs and have committed to \$6,200 in funding for each of the next three years.

A team lead by volunteer Andi Blackwell continues working to raise the grants and donations needed to provide a part-time manager for the pantry. The program seeks \$9,281 in additional funding to ensure the program will continue through December 2021. For more information, call Andi Blackwell at 503-558-6541. Donations can be mailed to: Gladstone Education Foundation, c/o Gladstone Food Pantry, 17789 Webster Road, Gladstone, OR 97027

“The Gladstone Food Pantry is a vital resource to hundreds of struggling families in our community, so we’ve taken a strategic fundraising approach to ensure it does not limp along from year to year,” said Blackwell. “It’s been truly heart-warming to see the way the community continues to step up to support the pantry and those who are most in need. We are in this for the long haul, and look forward to seeing this continue to grow and serve. We are also exploring additional opportunities with the City of Gladstone and Clackamas County’s Health Blueprint fund.”

In the 2017-18 school year, the pantry served 7,325 individuals from 2,189 households. Of those served, 85 percent are children and their families or caregivers, and 66 percent are from neighborhoods in or around Gladstone.

The Gladstone Food Pantry partners with the Oregon Food Bank, providing 60 families a week with free groceries, nutrition education, and a supportive community. It is located on the north side of the Gladstone High School campus off Nelson Lane. Operating hours are Thursdays from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to noon. All are welcome.

PHOTO: A volunteer helps a shopper plan nutritious meals at the Gladstone Food Pantry. The facility at Gladstone High School served more than 7,300 people last year.

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Teens tackle day of service to help Gladstone elders

This year 114 student leaders and athletes and 26 adults turned out to do yard work and outdoor chores for elderly neighbors in Gladstone.

Gladstone High’s sixth annual Give It Back Day is an opportunity for students to show appreciation for the community’s support of school and athletic programs.

Students raked leaves, pulled weeds, mowed lawns, and pruned hedges at 24 different homes. They also worked to lay bark chips on trails at the Gladstone Nature Park and picked up litter on Portland Avenue.

“Give Back Day shows the community how giving and hard working our students are,” said event leader Lynnda Prom. “It’s a pleasure to give back by helping neighbors who need a hand.”

PHOTO: Gladstone High students fanned out across the community to pick up litter, maintain park trails, and help seniors with yard work in the school’s sixth annual Gladstone Gives Back day of service.

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Gladstone High hosts regional robotics fair

More than 200 high school students from the Pacific Northwest came to Gladstone High School October 20 for a FIRST robotics fair. The event was designed to prepare teens for this year's competition season.

"Students had the opportunity to participate in 32 different workshops on topics from pneumatics, computer-aided design, and programming to electrical wiring, drive trains, and game strategy," said event organizer Steve Stewart. "They also learned about grants and college scholarship opportunities."

Teams traveled to the event from Coos Bay, Bend, Philomath, Newport, southwest Washington, and across the Portland area. All were affiliated with FIRST, For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology. The Gladstone School District has three competitive robotics teams, one at Gladstone High and two at Kraxberger Middle School.

PHOTO: Leaders from FIRST robotics teach a workshop on game strategy to high school students from across the Northwest.

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Dental van to provide free adult care in Gladstone

Adults on the Oregon Health Plan are invited to make an appointment for free dental care on October 31 and November 1 at the Gladstone Center for Children and Families, 18905 Portland Avenue. Those without insurance can receive services at a discounted rate.

Care will be provided in a mobile dental van provided by Arrow Dental. To schedule an appointment, call 503-653-4093.