

Renewal & Sustainability: 2023 Year End Report



Silver Spring Christian Reformed Church Food Pantry

Report Overview

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2023 Objectives and Actions

The 2022 year end report identified three objectives for 2023. The table below lists these objectives and the actions taken in 2023 to move toward these objectives. The results led to the renewal of the choice pantry and renewed leadership for the pantry. Taken together, this created a more financially stable pantry as well as a pantry with stronger leadership and community accountability.

2023 Objective	2023 Action
Create a sustainable pantry for the future	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reduced frequency of large community distribution to once a month● Re-introduced a choice pantry in May● Shifted distribution days to 2nd & 4th Tuesdays● Drafted and completed operations handbook (finished in January 2024)
Establish new planning team	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Established advisory team in October 2023
Partner with Love INC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Deacons work with Love INC and refer families to the referral pantry● Love INC provides training to deacons● Love INC collects food for the food pantry

Renewal & Sustainability: Bringing Back Choice

History: Choice pantry operated from August 2013 - February 2020. This pantry offered shelf-stable foods and fresh produce once a month. Participants did not need any referral or documentation to attend. The pantry served about 75-100 households per month.

2023 Context: The drive through pantry established to response to the pandemic required too many resources to continue twice-a-month distributions as outside funding remained strong but lower than in 2022. The church also desired to re-establish a choice pantry where there can be more of a focus on relationships, dignity, and stewardship.

Challenge: The pandemic style pantry was still serving a community need but was too large to convert to a choice pantry or even have a choice pantry advertised publicly because they number of attendees could overwhelm our capacity.

Renewal & Sustainability: Bringing Back Choice

Solution: Create a locally-based program by partnering with neighborhood schools to establish a referral-based choice food pantry to replace one community distribution each month.

Partnerships: The food pantry partnered with Arcola Elementary School, Kemp Mill Elementary School, and Odessa Shannon Middle School to refer families. Within the schools, the primary referral sources and contacts are the Linkages to Learning Programs.

Results: We established two different distribution styles. We hold a *community pantry* that is open to all and offers pre-packed food at a once a month drive through distribution. In May 2023, we reopened a choice format *referral pantry*. Attendance grew from 24 households the first month to 73 households in December. The pantry is open from 4 - 7 pm on the 4th Tuesday of each month.

Renewal & Sustainability: Bringing Back Choice



Food selection setup for referral pantry: Participants choose the food they want. Larger families may take extra of most shelf-stable goods.

Renewal & Sustainability: Bringing Back Choice



The Children's Table provides a place for kids to engage with volunteers in coloring or a craft while their parents shop.

Renewal & Sustainability: A New Schedule

The food pantry also changed its schedule when we revised the format.

Prior Schedule: Community pantry 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month from 2021 - 2022.

New Schedule:

- 2nd Tuesday: Community Pantry
- 4th Tuesday: Referral Pantry

Purpose: Avoids the most conflict with national holidays and church holidays that affect food deliveries and volunteer availability. Allows us to continue to serve the whole community in a more sustainable way with the added benefit of establishing deeper relationships through the referral pantry.



Renewal & Sustainability: Advisory Team

2022-2023 Context: An ad hoc group of church members met throughout 2022 and into 2023 to brainstorm the next steps for the food pantry. This team made recommendations for the new referral pantry and agreed to establishing an advisory team that would represent a cross-section of the food pantry community.

Action: With approval from Council, the Food Pantry Director recruited church members, community volunteers, and participants to join a Food Pantry Advisory Team that meets quarterly. The team currently consists of the Food Pantry Director, three people from the church, one person from the Jewish community, once person from St. Andrew Apostle Catholic Church, and one community volunteer. Another church attendee assists with translation for team members whose first language is Spanish. All members of the team have participated in the pantry as volunteers, and two have received food from the pantry. The goal for 2024 is to recruit another community member who is involved in the referral pantry.

Action: The advisory team convened in October 2023, met each other, discussed the purpose of the team, shared information about new resources, and reviewed the upcoming year's budget proposal.

Renewal and Sustainability: 2023 Distribution Data

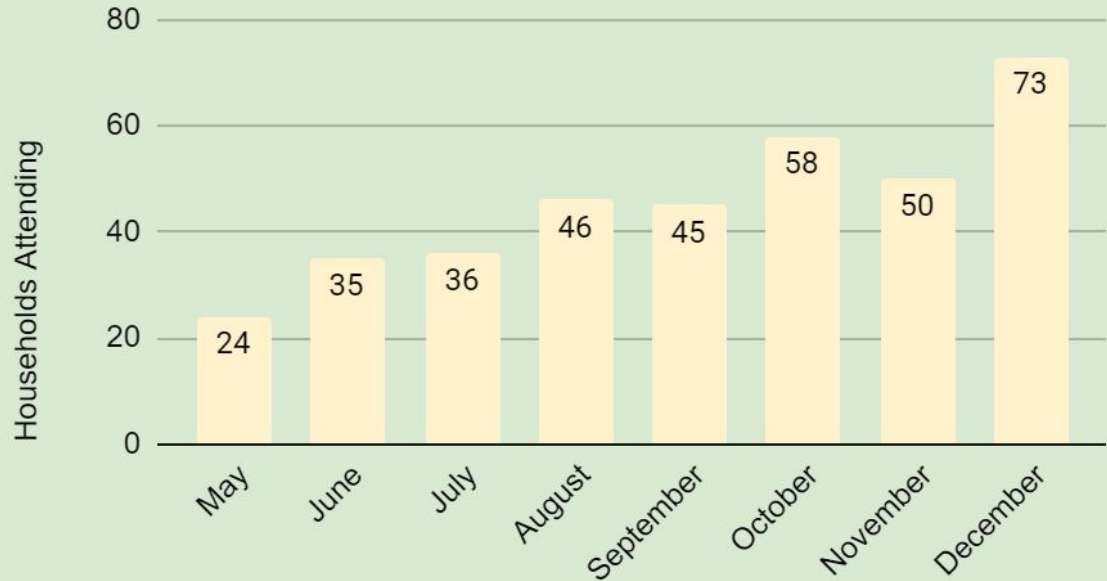
Collecting distribution data helps us understand “how much” and “how many.” It helps us plan from one month to the next and plan for the future of the pantry. Community pantry attendance is relatively stable; on average 668 households attended per distribution in 2021 and 648 per distribution in 2022. Although there is a slight increase per distribution in 2023, we also decreased the number of distributions.

	Community Pantry	Referral Pantry
Number of Distributions	15	8
Average households per distribution	686	46
Average individuals per distribution	3,376	221
Average lbs/household	25	40
Residents of 20902	44.6%	81.5%

Renewal and Sustainability: Referral Pantry Growth

The number of households participating increased throughout the year. In December, we contacted all registered households on the day of the pantry to remind them of distribution since we held the pantry a week early to accommodate Christmas. Initial 2024 data shows attendance in the range of 60 - 70 households.

Referral Pantry Attendance, 2023



Renewal and Sustainability: Food Pantry Funding

2023 Overview:

- Strong support continued from Montgomery County Government in the form of CAFB credits for shelf stable food purchases and funding for pre-packed produce.
- We did not spend the full amount allocated in the General Fund; some funds remained in the salary and food line items.
- The Food Pantry Fund handled some large expenditures for shelf stable foods (during a break in County funding) and on produce for approximately half of participants. This fund spent more this year than it took in; however, we did not solicit donations since our needs were met in other ways.



Renewal and Sustainability: SSCRC Fund Trends

The general fund budget was underspent, primarily in the salary and wages line items.

The Food Pantry fund ended the year with a lower balance than it started with, however, the demands on this fund are decreasing. In 2022, the fund expended over \$31,000. To date in 2024, additional produce support from the CAFB has further slowed expenditures from this fund.

General Fund	
Budget	\$16,341.75
Expenditures	\$12,817.71
Food Pantry Fund	
Starting Balance	\$23,625.98
Donations	\$20,699.19
Expenditures	\$29,210.19
Ending Balance	\$15,509.21

Renewal and Sustainability: Non-Salary Expenditures

The expenditures shown here detail non-salary food pantry costs that were supported by the congregation and by individual donors. This is only a portion of the total cost of food for the pantry. The next slide shows the extent that the pantry is supported by County funding.

Non-Salary Food Pantry Expenditures for 2023	
Food Pantry Fund: Shelf Stable	\$15,082
Food Pantry Fund: Produce	\$11,626
General Fund Food	\$1,682
Total Food	\$28,390
Food Pantry Fund: Bags for distribution	\$2,502
General Fund: Other Supplies and Expenses	\$299
Total Supplies	\$2,802
Total Non-Salary Expenditures	\$31,192

Renewal and Sustainability: Total Value of Food

In all, the value of credits used at the CAFB in 2024 was about \$80,000, more than four times what SSCRC spent on shelf stable food.

In addition to shelf stable food, we received 320 boxes of free produce for each community distribution. We do not know the value of these boxes.

Actual Value of Shelf Stable Food vs. Estimated Expenditures	
Total Value of CAFB Purchases	\$96,835.20
SSCRC Expenditure on Shelf Stable Food	\$16,764
Value of CAFB Credits Used	\$80,071.25

*Expenditures do not exactly match value of purchased food. Expenditures are for the 2023 Fiscal year while purchase value is for the 2023 calendar year. Some invoices paid in FY23 were from 2022 and some expenses for 2023 are paid in FY24.

Renewal and Sustainability: Volunteer Support

- Overall trend: Volunteer base is strong and yet changing
- Fewer volunteers from SSCRC, especially on Monday nights, but we have a core group of dedicated, frequent SSCRC volunteers, including people who take on leadership roles
- Increasing involvement of youth volunteers from St. Andrew Apostle church and school, Odessa Shannon Middle School, and Northwood High School
- Occasional groups of youth volunteers from other youth groups or youth organizations, like Girl Scouts



Renewal and Sustainability: Looking Ahead

Program Goals for 2024:

- Hygiene items: The advisory team agreed that it would be helpful to begin offering hygiene items again at the referral pantry. We will be working to set up drives and raise funding for this project
- Outside funding: The food pantry currently relies heavily on funding from Montgomery County Government for produce and shelf stable foods that we get through the CAFB. Finding additional outside funding could help us keep services stable when there are contract gaps and/or changes to funding amounts and processes. Given the extent the pantry relies on County funding, we need to be ready to adjust operations based on funding
- Increased involvement of food pantry participants: Food pantry participants continue to volunteer to set up food; a few have participated in the Advisory Team. During 2024, we would like to explore more opportunities to involve participants in operations and leadership.



Renewal and Sustainability: Looking Ahead

Operational Considerations:

- **Storage:** The food pantry team is working with the congregation to make near-term changes to building use and storage options so that the classroom is free for other church uses. We will also work with the congregation to brainstorm and support long-term building expansion that can benefit the community, including through the food pantry program.
- **Long-term community involvement:** The food pantry is successful largely because of the board community involvement of volunteers and individual donors. During this year, we would like to take additional steps to strengthen these relationships for the future.



Renewal and Sustainability: Significant Program Changes

Consideration of creating a non-profit organization

- Long-term community participation
- New funding opportunities
- Flexibility for congregational transitions

Consideration of establishing a youth-led board or youth-led pantry program

- Youth value volunteering at the pantry
- Youth have language and cultural knowledge and more time than adults
- Leadership and skill development can benefit their future opportunities