



# Southport/Oak Island Food Pantry

Southport/Oak Island Interchurch Fellowship

Building bridges and meeting human needs

Southport/Oak Island Food Pantry Newsletter

First Quarter 2010

If you don't see the Food Pantry Logo above this panel, click on "Display Images" at the top of this email. Thank you!

## Welcome!

We at the Southport/Oak Island Food Pantry are pleased to have this new way to reach out to neighbors far and wide, to keep in touch and to let you know who we are and what we're doing.

Our plan is to publish this email newsletter once a quarter. And if there is news or a special need in between, we'll send out short bulletins. Our goal is not to overload your inbox, but rather to keep you informed and connected to an organization that is doing really good work in our little corner of Brunswick County.

We welcome your comments and questions. We hope to get to know you better!



## About the Food Pantry

The Southport/Oak Island Food Pantry, which now operates under the sponsorship of the Southport/Oak Island Interchurch Fellowship, had a pretty modest beginning. It got its start in 1998 in a secretary's closet at Trinity Methodist Church in Southport. From there it expanded into a Sunday School room, then years later it relocated to a building on Long Beach Road.

In July of 2008, the Food Pantry moved into a brand new 2,400 square foot custom built facility in Boiling Spring Lakes. Inside is one large area that looks like a cross between a warehouse and a grocery store from back in the 1950's-- it's a no-frills operation. Around its perimeter are 8 freezers, a 12' X 12' walk-in refrigerator, and shelves that accommodate as many as 30 pallets. In the center, are supermarket aisles where food recipients choose from a variety of canned goods, staples, produce, meat and bakery items, assisted by a volunteer who explains what is available and in what quantity.

The Food Pantry was established for only one purpose -- to provide food for the hungry. To qualify for assistance, a person must show a picture ID and must live in Southport, Boiling Spring Lakes, Oak Island or Sunset Harbor. Eligible individuals or families can receive assistance from the Food Pantry only once every 28 days.

The people who receive assistance from the Food Pantry represent a broad spectrum of ethnic and socio-economic groups. And given the

current economic climate, with more people unemployed than has been the case for many years, there are individuals and families asking for help that never needed help before.

Funding for the Pantry comes from a number of sources -- individuals, churches, the Lion's Club, Kiwanis, Rotary, Knights of Columbus, St. James Service Club, and grants from FEMA, the Catherine Kennedy Foundation and Brunswick Electric. In addition, Lowe's and Food Lion on Long Beach Road contribute meat, produce, bakery and dairy goods.

Located at 249 Boiling Springs Road in Boiling Spring Lakes, the Pantry distributes food on Tuesday and Saturday mornings from 9:00 to noon and on Thursday nights from 6:00 to 7:30.

## Meet the Director

Director Bill Hogue got his start at the Food Pantry as a volunteer in 2002 soon after he and his wife Kay moved to Southport. A road construction supervisor and transportation consultant for the state of Ohio in his previous life, Bill took over the Directorship from Larry Mizell in 2004.



If there is anything you need to know about the Southport/Oak Island Food Pantry, Bill Hogue is your guy. And he doesn't have to look anything up -- it's all in his head -- whether he's talking suppliers, prices, equipment, delivery schedules, plans, you name it.

Simply stated, one gets the impression that Bill eats and sleeps the Food Pantry. He is 100% committed and sold on this organization, its mission and its volunteers. And it shows. He is always looking forward to what is next, asking how the organization can increase its capacity so it can do more for more people.

His leadership and creativity and vision have taken the Food Pantry to a whole new level, something that was recognized when he was named by

the Star News as one of the Ten Top Volunteers in the area in 2007.

## **Southport/Oak Island Food Pantry Facts**

- There are no salaried employees of the Food Pantry. It is entirely staffed and run by volunteers. Every dollar donated goes directly to the purchase of food or support services like rent, equipment and utilities.
- Last year, the Pantry spent \$89,237 for food, and the estimated retail value of the food distributed is estimated at \$598,458. This means that every dollar spent on food translated to roughly \$7 in benefits to individuals or families served.
- In 2009, the Pantry provided assistance to 24,815 people. The average individual or family visiting the food pantry received 87 pounds of food per month, the estimated value of which was \$120.10.
- The Southport/Oak Island Food Pantry is one of only two walk-in pantries in North Carolina. (This means that people get some choice about what they receive rather than getting pre-packed grocery bags.)
- The Food Pantry not only provides direct assistance to people at its Boiling Spring Lakes facility, it also contributes canned goods and meat to the Meals on Wheels Programs of the Antioch Baptist Church and St. Peter's Lutheran Church.

## **Immediate Needs**

More than anything, the Food Pantry needs consistent cash contributions to purchase food and cover operating expenses -- rent, utilities, and equipment. While we do receive some income from grants and gifts from community organizations, we depend on ongoing financial participation by our neighbors and friends to continue to meet the needs of the population we serve.

Some people choose to provide monthly payments through an

automatic withdrawal from their bank account. Others prefer to write periodic checks and mail them or deliver them in person.

If you'd like to get a better sense of the Food Pantry as you consider becoming a contributor, we welcome that. Give Director Bill Hogue a call (his contact information is below). He will be glad to show you around and answer any questions you may have.

## Get Involved!

There are lots of ways to get involved with the Southport/Oak Island Food Pantry.

1. Volunteers are our lifeblood. There are lots of ways you can help. You can work directly with recipients, helping them on mornings or evenings when food is distributed. And if you prefer, you can help behind-the-scenes packing out shelves, dividing up bulk quantities of food into smaller containers, helping keep the Pantry organized and ready for business.
2. Do you have a mini-van or a truck or have access to one? If so, you can help with food or materials pickups at one of a number of locations from Wilmington to South Carolina. And even if you don't have a vehicle, there is always a need for people to help with pickups and deliveries on both ends.
3. Organize a fund-raiser or a food drive in your workplace, your local community, church, club or organization.
4. Forward this newsletter to friends or others you think would be interested in learning about the Food Pantry.
5. The Food Pantry is going green! At the end of last year, we began raising money to purchase reusable grocery bags for our food recipients. This will save us money in the long run, and it is far more environmentally friendly. We're looking for people willing to help us raise money for this

program.

Whatever you like or want to do, there is almost certainly a way you can put your talents and energy to work for the Food Pantry. Importantly, the people who volunteer here have a wonderful time as they do this good work in our community.

## **Don't be a stranger!**

If you're even a little bit curious about who we are and what we do, we hope you'll come visit. There is usually someone at the Food Pantry until noon Monday through Saturday. If you're making a special trip, call before you come. We'll show you around, introduce you to the folks who are working that day, and you can get a first-hand look at the operation. We're located at 249 West Boiling Springs Road in Boiling Spring Lakes.

To reach the Food Pantry, call Director Bill Hogue at (910) 269-1034 .

If you'd like to make a monetary contribution, checks should be made out to the Southport/Oak Island Food Pantry and mailed to P.O. Box 711, Oak Island, NC 28465.

What questions or comments do you have about the Food Pantry? Email us at [maggie.roedema@gmail.com](mailto:maggie.roedema@gmail.com). Future newsletters will feature any questions or comments we receive.

We thank you for asking to receive this newsletter, and we look forward to connecting again real soon.