

Charge Conference Report 2019

Supplemental Food Program -- sponsored by the New Paltz United Methodist Church

Background:

The New Paltz United Methodist Church has a long history of working to meet the needs of the community.

Initially, we were concerned about the summer food supply of families whose children are eligible to receive free breakfast and/or lunch during the school year. Since school is closed during July and August, there is a need for these families to have supplemental food during these two months. In 2017, we approached Administrative Council and with approval began a Summer Food Supplemental program to help meet the needs of these families. We gathered money to buy food. We assembled the food items into bags and distributed the bags of food to needy families through Family of New Paltz. In 2017, 50 families were provided with food in July and August.

In 2018, we provided food for 92 children in July, 91 children in August and 54 children in September. September was added as a result of a one time only grant from the Nyquist Foundation.

In the Spring of 2019, Family of New Paltz data indicated quite a few families in need were moving out of the New Paltz area because housing costs are so high and rising here. We contacted community leaders and organizations to re-evaluate food needs in New Paltz area. As a result of this outreach, we learned of the food needs of senior citizens in New Paltz. In addition, we also were confronted with the reality that there were farm worker families in need but not coming to Family of New Paltz.

In response to the 2019 needs, in addition to providing needed supplemental food to Family of New Paltz, we consulted with the staff at Meadowbrook, a housing complex in New Paltz for those with limited income and the Agricultural Business Community Development Center (ABCD Center) which provides child care and family services for agricultural workers' families.

At Meadowbrook, the need is for supplemental food for senior citizens. The staff identified 10 households in need. We provided supplemental food to these 10 households in July and August. Clearly, the food needs of seniors are not related to the school calendar. Therefore, we decided to continue providing supplemental food to seniors throughout the year. Currently, we provide supplemental food to 10 senior households at Meadowbrook each month. We stay in contact with the Meadowbrook director and will continue to assess needs.

In response to the need of agricultural workers' families, we provided 15 bags of supplemental food each week to the ABCD Center during the months of July and August. In consultation with the director of the center, it was determined that while children receive breakfast and lunch at the center and school age children are eligible for assistance at school, the food needs of these families continued beyond the summer. In response, we are providing 15 bags of supplemental food each month to the ABCD Center families. We expect to continue this provision throughout the winter. We stay in contact with the Center director and will re-assess needs in the Spring.

Currently, we solicit and receive funds for the program needs of children and their families. We have received funds from church members, friends, the Rotary, the Reformed Church (Twice Blessed) and the Quaker fellowship and the Lions Club. We received enough money for 2019 to cover expenses for July and August and for the monthly supplement to 10 seniors for the remainder of 2019. In our presentation to Rotary, we explained the senior citizen needs and received their permission and blessing to use funds for seniors' needs. The current Rotary president has indicated that needs of seniors in New Paltz is one of her priorities. We plan to meet after Thanksgiving to see how to better assess and respond to needs of seniors in our area. We continue to work with Family of New Paltz. In addition, we have begun to communicate and coordinate our food program needs with Joan Gallagher and her food resources.

In order to provide some supplemental food to ABCD Center families beyond the summer, in September 2019, we applied for and received a \$1,000.00 grant from the Eloise McKnight Trust. In addition, we applied for and hope to get approval to use NPUMC Endowment funds. We plan is to use the McKnight funds and Endowment funds to cover food costs through the winter. We will be working

with our faith community, community groups and friends to gather the money needed for 2020.

God is faithful. Church members and the community have been caring and responsive.

Costs: Each bag of supplemental food costs between \$20.00 and \$25.00.

The expenses for each month are \$500.00-\$625.00 if we continue our current monthly provision of 10 bags a month to seniors and 15 bags a month to ABCD Center. We plan to continue this schedule through the winter and re-assess needs in the Spring.

Note: We ask families to return the bags each month so we can re-use them.