

Hunger Free Lenawee

Meeting Notes

March 3, 2021

Present: Laura Pipis, Heather Pearce, Madeline DeMarco, Terrina Liogghio, De'Angelo Boone, Haley Cook, Frank Nagle, Anne Walker, Debra Davies, Cindy Frownfelder, Vickie Pfiefer and Guest Speaker, Stephanie Zorn Kasprzak from Monroe County Opportunity Program (MCOP).

1. Announcements - Heather Pearce shared that the South Michigan Food Bank issued a 10% match of donations to the food bank.
2. Guest Speaker, Stephanie Zorn Kasprzak, MCOP – Stephanie gave a history of the centralized food pantry system in Monroe County. It started in Monroe County in 1983 with a single, volunteer food pantry provider who initiated coordination with other county food pantries. MCOP works with the Gleaners Food Bank, based in the Detroit area. They are the centralized hub for Gleaner's food distribution in Monroe County. Area food pantries place their orders through MCOP for countywide distribution. MCOP worked with the USDA Rural Development funding partner in 2000 to include a larger warehouse in their new building. Later in 2008, the USDA also helped with a \$500,000 match to build on a warehouse addition and a new individual food-choice pantry system, the Lord's Harvest Pantry. The pantry is a points system based on family size. Fresh food incentives are built into the system. Currently this pantry does more curbside distribution with limited in-person shoppers due to COVID-19. MCOP also coordinates mobile food pantry events with their food pantry providers throughout the year. The mobile food pantry events increased during COVID-19 from 2-3 per month to 11-13 per month. Stephanie shared these benefits to the centralized food pantry distribution model:
 - Gleaner's Food Bank only goes to one place.
 - They can move lots of food quickly.
 - Cuts down on transportation costs.
 - Creates additional cost efficiencies.
 - Local food pantries can use volunteers for direct food provision vs. moving the food.
 - Cost per pound is only 9 cents for all food pantries.
3. Field Trip Report – A group from HFL (Anne W., Debra D., Cindy F., De'Angelo B., and Laura S-P) visited MCOP and the Oaks of Righteousness Village on Monday, 3/1 (yesterday). They toured MCOP's food distribution warehouse and the Lord's Harvest Pantry. They also toured the food pantry, soup kitchen and new Village Market at the Oaks of Righteousness Village. The Oaks Village Market is an entrepreneurial approach to creating an actual food market that employs local community members to operate the store. They are located in a food desert in Monroe. Essential foods will be available, highlighting fresh meat and produce choices—no tobacco or liquor. Initial funding is through grants and donations. Free consultants have guided them from ProMedica nutrition teams and Busch's Cares on how to establish a grocery store. The store hopes to open for business in 2 weeks. Although they collaborate with the MCOP food pantry distribution system, some needed food items are not available through pantry systems. Local convenience stores lack fresh meat and produce to supply the neighborhood. Community members lack transportation to get to larger grocery stores in Monroe. Area bus routes take 2-3

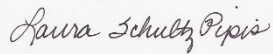
transfers and all day to get around, and they limit patrons to 2 bags of groceries. These concerns brought about this new venture into a food market. They also will have an ice cream counter inside the store in partnership with the local Independent Dairy ice cream brand. Neighborhood teens will work at the ice cream counter.

Some insights shared from the field trip group:

- They could see cost efficiencies in a centralized system.
- The ability to move food quickly is a positive.
- They saw the importance of warehouse space for food storage.
- Food choice options help eliminate food waste.
- Increased network communication helps serve more people.
- They liked how MCOP/Lord's Harvest Pantry offered sponsorships for various sections of the pantry and promoted them well.

4. Next Scheduled meeting is **Tuesday, April 6th at 1:00 PM.**

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura Schultz Pipis". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Laura Schultz Pipis