



## Mobile Pantry Brings More Food to More Agencies

*Distribute Same Day; No Shared Maintenance*

Mid-South Food Bank has introduced the mobile pantry food distribution program for interested agencies. This program is great for agencies that do not have a lot of storage space, especially for fresh and frozen products, because the food arrives and is distributed the same day.



At each mobile pantry location, a Food Bank refrigerated truck arrives, loaded with anywhere from 2,500 to 20,000 pounds of wholesome food, including fresh produce, bakery items, beverages, snacks, condiments and other items. Host agencies do not order the food and will not know for sure what is going to be delivered until it arrives. Mobile pantry distribution can take place on the agency's regular distribution day or an additional day, at the agency's discretion. Volunteers unload the boxes to tables that have been set up, restock items as needed, help clients with their packages and make them aware

of any product limits. Any product left from the mobile pantry distribution remains with the agency.

There are no shared maintenance fees for mobile pantry products. The host agency is responsible for setting up the distribution, getting volunteers and publicizing the event. Mid-South Food Bank will help with sample fliers and other materials to get started. We can also help train agency staff and volunteers on this new distribution method.



The first Mid-South Food Bank member agencies to host a mobile pantry were McNairy County Loaves and Fishes in Selmer, Tennessee and Pilgrim's Rest in Union City, Tennessee. Both were extremely successful, serving large crowds of people who waited patiently to receive food. Loaves and Fishes distributed indoors at a local church, while Pilgrim's Rest had an outdoor set-up. Both



locations had plenty of volunteers, which is vital for a smooth mobile pantry distribution. Also vital is making sure those who qualify know about the opportunity to access free food. A small ad in the local newspaper, fliers at churches and other appropriate places and announcements in church bulletins and from the pulpit are just some of the ways to get the word out.

As always, food is distributed free of charge, without discrimination, on a first-come basis. Clients are screened using the agency's income guidelines.

Precautions are taken to assure that each client receives an appropriate supply of food and is receiving food for that person's use or their family's use. The mobile pantry is targeting agencies in underserved areas, so not every agency can be a host site. For more information, call Christina Anaman at Mid-South Food Bank, 901-527-0841.

AGENCY NEWS

## Client Choice Pantries Find Favor With Clients

When it comes to food, we all have our preferences. Even the person who says they eat everything can usually think of one or two things they absolutely can't stand. It's the same with the clients who come to a food pantry. That is why many pantries have adopted the "client choice" model for their distribution. Instead of pre-packed bags of groceries, tables or shelves are set up and available products are arranged by categories, such as pasta, vegetables, fruit, breakfast items, etc. Clients then choose items based on their or their family's need and personal tastes. Quantity limits are determined by the agency based on family size. Pantries that offer client choice report being pleasantly surprised that mothers will choose the unsweetened cereal over the sugared box and pass up the candy in favor of raisins or nuts.



*First Congregational Church's Client Choice Pantry*

By offering clients the opportunity to choose the food they want, you know the food will actually be consumed by those in need. Offering choices also allows the agency's volunteers more opportunity to interact with the clients, getting to know them, their families and preferences, rather than just packing and handing out bags.

Julie Hicks, Director of Ministries at First Congregational Church in Memphis, says her volunteers and clients love the client choice pantry. "It's one of the easiest ministries for the biggest, most heartwarming bang. We distribute on Sundays, right after church, so the volunteers are already there. Our first distribution was to 24 households, now it's up to 40."

The client choice system can also make it easier to distribute the small quantity odds and ends that come in through food donations. If you get in a can of pickled okra, put it out and someone will choose it and appreciate it.

## Reminders from Your Friends at Mid-South Food Bank



The warehouse crew at Mid-South Food Bank wants to remind all agency representatives who come to pick up orders to check your order carefully before you leave the dock! We do everything we can to fill your order correctly, but it is your responsibility to check that order for accuracy before you get it back to your agency. It saves everyone time and frustration. No adjustments will be made once you leave the dock, so check your order!

Another thing to check is your order before you place it. Make sure you are ordering what you need in the quantities you need. For example, we recently had to take several pounds of beans off someone's order because they were dried beans and the agency representative thought he was ordering canned beans. There is a restocking fee of one cent per pound or \$25, whichever is greater, for every item that is changed after the order has been pulled and made ready for pick-up.

When shopping in the pantry, you are responsible for bringing boxes to load and carry your items. Mid-South Food Bank does not have a ready supply of boxes for agencies to use. And don't forget you agency ID card!

Remember that you must bring an adequate number of able-bodied people to load your order yourself. Food Bank warehouse personnel are not supposed to load your order for you. Plus, loading your order yourself makes it easier to check!

# Another Great Agency Conference

The 2009 Agency Conference was attended by more than 150 agency representatives and everyone enjoyed the fellowship, the workshops, the food, the door prizes, the cute little piggy banks and the awards. Keynote speaker, Commercial Appeal columnist Wendi Thomas delivered a heartwarming talk that was both funny and inspiring about her experiences competing with her brother to see who could eat the cheapest. She quickly learned how hard it is to eat healthy when you can't spend much. Attendees learned about the latest in nutrition, shared their best practices and got lots of information and tips on fundraising. It was a wonderful day, capped off by the Awards Luncheon.



## 2009 Award Winners

- 1. *Feed the Need Award*  
Agency of the Year  
Manna Ministries  
Raleigh Assembly of God Church**
- 2. Outstanding Food Pantry  
Friends for Life  
Nancy Fletcher Food Pantry**
- 3. Outstanding On-Site Feeding  
Program  
Aspell Recovery Center**
- 4. Outstanding Youth Program  
Boys & Girls Club of the  
Mississippi Delta  
Tunica Units**
- 5. Outstanding Performance  
Tippah County  
Good Samaritan Center  
North Branch**

## New Agencies and New Programs

Mid-South Food Bank is always looking for additional ways to feed the hungry and needy people of the Mid-South, so we are proud to announce the addition of several new agencies and new programs added by member agencies. Even with these additions, we currently have no agencies serving Lake, Lauderdale and Crockett Counties in Tennessee. If you know of a church or other organization that has an existing feeding program or would like to start one and might be interested in becoming a Mid-South Food Bank member agency, please contact Christina Anaman, 901-527-0841.

- Case Management, Memphis residential program, acquired a downtown ministry
- United Methodist Neighborhood Center, Memphis pantry, added a new location
- First Congregational Church, Memphis pantry, added a client choice pantry
- Iglesia Apostolica is a new pantry in Memphis, serving a largely Hispanic population
- Mississippi Delta Council is a new pantry with a central location in Clarksdale that serves five north Mississippi counties
- Petra Ministries is new pantry in McNairy County, Tennessee

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