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THE DINNER BELL

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF



OUR MISSION:

TO ALLEVIATE FOOD INSECURITY THROUGHOUT ST. MARY'S COUNTY

OUR VISION:

A ST. MARY'S COUNTY FREE FROM HUNGER



WHAT'S INSIDE:

- *KEY CONCEPTS IN FEEDING ST. MARY'S*
- *REMEMBERING MICHELLE PHILLIPS*
- *FSM PARTNER PANTRIES*

Do you need food or Personal Protective Equipment and supplies? You may contact your local food pantry or Wayne Millen, Feed St. Mary's Warehouse Manager at (240) 237-8197.

KEY CONCEPTS IN FEEDING ST. MARY'S:

It is easy to see needs, but solving problems can be an issue. An important part of the problem-solving process is understanding the questions and the concepts that combine to make a difference. Feeding the hungry is a classic example of how obvious the need seems to be, but it is also important to understand the elements that work in harmony to alleviate the concern. Hunger is a global challenge; nevertheless, people in St. Mary's County are committed to making a difference in our backyard. As we work together, it is important to have a shared understanding and a working, sustainable process. Key definitions include:

Food Insecurity – Food insecurity is defined as the state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. Food insecurity is not always driven by any single issue; it can be fueled by a variety of challenges including, poverty, transportation and even a lack of a local food distribution infrastructure. We must keep in mind that food insecurity is not necessarily measured by the needs of the general public, but by those who are hungry – and there are those in St. Mary's County who do not have reliable access to affordable, nutritious food.

Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed – “ALICE” refers to individuals and families who earn too much money to qualify for many assistance programs; however, they are lacking viable financial resources – in other words, the working poor. Their earnings are above the Federal Poverty Level, but their real spending power is below what is needed to maintain a sustainable lifestyle and may often have to choose between necessities – such as paying their rent or buying healthy groceries each month. Even though St. Mary's County has a traditionally low unemployment rate, we have a significant number of people who fit under the ALICE umbrella.

Food Pantries – Local community food pantries are the front-line, grass-roots volunteers who serve those battling food insecurity. These organizations design and implement individual programs that identify and supply individuals and families who need additional food. Food pantries provide a “storefront” environment where people can go to supplement their food supply. Additionally, food pantries work with partner organizations to obtain food. Whether it is marshalling volunteers, obtaining food or soliciting monetary food donations, pantries are the conduit through which people who want to help can interface with those who need the help. By working together, these groups elevate the quality of life for those who need help – whether they are homeless, in poverty or just need some extra help to make ends meet.

Food Banks – Food banks are responsible for warehousing and distributing food from initial sources to food pantries. There are several models of how food banks work in the United States. St. Mary's County utilizes a “hub and spoke model” that allows local food pantries access to a large amount of food from the Maryland Food Bank which is delivered to, stored and distributed by the Feed St. Mary's Food Bank. Additionally, through the assistance of other state, community and private partners, Feed St. Mary's has been able to acquire additional food which is being provided to the local food pantries and soup kitchens at no cost.

Feed St. Mary's is dedicated to being an effective leader and a good partner in alleviating food insecurity in St. Mary's County. We are constantly looking for ways to bring nutritious food into the county and to get the food into the hands of those who need it. By working together with public and private organizations, we will alleviate food insecurity in St. Mary's County and become a county free from hunger.

Check out an up-to-date list of St. Mary's County Food Pantries and Soup Kitchens:
<https://feedstmarys.org/services/>

IN MEMORIUM: MICHELLE NOWAK PHILLIPS



Michelle Phillips passed away on August 20, 2020. Michelle was instrumental in the early development of Feed St. Mary's. Michelle was the Partner Services and TEFAP Director Maryland Food Bank and not only worked to help FSM get started, she became a community advocate who took Feed St. Mary's message out to the public.

We are thankful to have gotten to know Michelle and want to pass our thoughts and condolences to her friends, family and co-workers at the Maryland Food Bank.

SPOTLIGHTING PANTRY PARTNERSHIPS

Feed St. Mary's is dedicated to cooperating with **all** food pantries and soup kitchens in St. Mary's County. Additionally, FSM has the ability to develop enhanced partnerships with agencies which allows greater access to the Maryland Food Bank; including more detailed ordering opportunities. Currently FSM has three full pantry partners: Our Daily Bread (Good Samaritan Lutheran Church), St. Vincent de Paul of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish Food Pantry and Church of the Ascension Food Pantry. Feed St. Mary's is in the process of adding several new pantries to this partnership, including Feed My Sheep Food Pantry (Lexington Park Baptist Church), Trinity Care Pantry (Trinity Lutheran Church) and First Friendship Pantry (First Friendship Methodist Church). Feed St. Mary's continues to look for new partner opportunities. If your food pantry or soup kitchen would like to learn more about developing a partnership with Feed St. Mary's, contact the New Pantry Volunteer Coordinator, Cheryl Brown at (240) 237-8197.

**Would you like to donate your time or treasure to support Feed St. Mary's?
It is as simple as a click of the mouse!**

To become a volunteer visit: <https://feedstmarys.org/volunteer/>
To make a monetary donation visit: <https://feedstmarys.org/donate/>

Feed St. Mary's
Greatly Appreciates
its Operational Sponsors



Generous Citizens
of Southern Maryland

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FEED ST. MARY'S**

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