

open the 3rd Thursday every month at Wesley 5pm-7:30pm • open Saturdays 10am-12pm at Parkland

Who We've Served

On November 20th the Wesley Evening Food Pantry was honored to serve 1215 individuals, including 546 children, in 271 households.

As of November 2014, the Wesley Evening Food Pantry has served 13,669 individuals, including 7,365 children. The Wesley Pantry at Parkland has served 1,793 individuals, including 588 children.

Upcoming Pantry Dates

- Every Saturday in January from 10am-12pm at Parkland (open to anyone who needs food and whose income is at or below 185% of the federal poverty level)
- Thursday 15 January 5pm-7:30pm at Wesley for anyone in the community

Wesley Food Pantries Welcome New Staff

Please join us in welcoming our new pantry staff. This 4-member team is the equivalent 60 hours per week or 1 ½ full time employees. Our new staff has been carefully selected and is invested in pursuing a comprehensive pantry program with each focusing on one particular area of service for the pantry.



Our new Pantries Director is **Katie Thomas**. Katie has earned a law degree and has most recently served as the director of CASA in Danville, Illinois. She comes to Wesley with a great

deal of experience working with staff and volunteers as well as public speaking and fundraising.



Our new Assistant to the Director (a new position) is **Shelsea McCarthy**. A recent college graduate, she comes to us from Minnesota. Shelsea brings supervisory experience and great

people skills to the position as well as food pantry experience.



Bob Douglas is our new Operations Manager (another new position) and will oversee the set-up, running, and take down of each pantry. He is a former Post Office Manager and has been a pantry volunteer on many pantry days and nights.



Pinto beans, packaged by Illini Fighting Hunger, available for clients at the Parkland pantry.

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Britany Coleman is our new Volunteer Coordinator, although she is not new to the pantries. She has served as a pantry intern at Wesley. Britany has helped tremendously during the interim period since Donna Camp's new position began at the Eastern Illinois Food Bank (EIF) in August.

Matching Campaign a Success

The Matching Challenge for the Wesley Food Pantries was a great success! We received close to \$14,600 in donations in response to the challenge including the \$4000 pledged by the matching donors. The matching donors were thrilled with the overwhelming response. Thank you so much for your generosity! This level of giving will help us feed over 3000 individuals!

McKinley Joins Wesley

McKinley Presbyterian Church has encouraged some of their amazing individuals to volunteer for the Wesley Evening Food Pantry and we are grateful for their helping hands!

A shout out to one of their ministries: They are seeking to clothe the community through their Clothing Exchange, a free clothing shop that offers individuals up to 20 articles of clothing. This ministry is on Tuesdays and Fridays this month from 2-4pm.



An Eastern Illinois Foodbank truck drops off food for a Thursday food distribution at Wesley.

Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

I hope this newsletter finds you all well. As this holiday season approaches, it is a reminder to take a moment to count our blessings. The Wesley Food Pantries are grateful for the dedication of our volunteers and Board of Directors, and for the steadfast support of our loyal donors and community friends. Our Wesley family appreciates all that you make possible for the food insecure in our community.

As thankful as I am that we have helped feed thousands of people in need over the years, there is still more to do. I encourage everyone to join the Wesley Food Pantries in our 2015 resolution to do more for those who are food insecure. Please help us increase awareness, promote volunteerism and secure additional funding so that we can provide food and resources to all the food insecure people in our community. The most important gift we can give families is the food and peace of mind they deserve and need to thrive.

Whether you are one of our incredible volunteers or generous donors, thank you for your support and belief in our mission. We know that without you, we could not exist. With your continued support and confidence, great things can be accomplished.

Thank you for all you do for the families in our community!

Yours truly,
Katie

Katalyna Thomas
Director of the Wesley Food Pantries

Flu Shots, SNAP & More

At the November evening pantry, in addition to offering nutritious staples such as beans, rice, meat, and eggs, the pantry hosted organizations who provided no-cost flu vaccinations to more than 50 people, assisted people with signing up for SNAP benefits, and helped people with referrals to local resources.

Literacy & Children's Books at Wesley

The Children's Activity Center began in 2006 in response to the significant number of children who waited with their families' to receive food. Sometimes the wait was lengthy and placed strain on families seeking to occupy their energetic youth.

Seeing this need, pantry volunteers requested the donation of children's books in good condition. The community enthusiastically met this need bringing in boxes of children's books that were then sorted into four reading level groupings: preschool, elementary, middle school and high school.

The extraordinary volunteers at the Children's Activity Center includes two librarians who are happy to make referrals and help children find books that fit their reading level and interests.

This interactive system echoes the principles of the food pantry which are to encourage client growth and empower them. This enrichment occurs when children chose two books every pantry to take home, or when their parents are reminded that they too can choose two books to bring home for every child in their home.

Children's Activity Area Notes:

- The greatest number of donated books is in the preschool category, which is also the first group of books that runs out every month.
- Occasionally there will be a request for an adult book, and there are frequent requests for chapter books, which are less frequently donated.
- Children and their parents request books written in their native language, often Spanish and French. Books written in these languages are rarely donated and go quickly.
- The pantry is happy to receive any books in good condition and advertises this service in the weekly church bulletin.
- If you would like to donate books, please drop off your books at the Center Office and they will be distributed to our community at the next evening pantry!

Many thanks are due to Annette Lansford and her wonderful volunteer crew who help our community in this important way.

Wesley Evening Pantry vs. Parkland Pantry

The Wesley Evening Food Pantry and Wesley Pantry at Parkland College both share the same parent organization and goal of combating local food insecurity. However, each pantry is its own program and has its own budget for food, meaning donations designated to a certain pantry are used for that pantry. Another important note is that the Parkland pantry is a USDA-certified pantry and receives free government commodities that we use to serve students, veterans and the local community.

wesley evening 
FOOD PANTRY

wesley 
FOOD PANTRY
@PARKLAND COLLEGE

New, Easy Way to Donate

Donate easily everyday without opening your wallet! The Wesley Food Pantries are now associated with <http://www.goodsearch.com/>.

Make this Yahoo search engine your search engine and donate \$0.01 with every search. It adds up!


simply do good

To be removed from our mailing list please contact the pantry at donate@wesleypantry.org or 217-344-1120.

Letter from Former Director

Dear Wesley family,

I am grateful beyond words that you have allowed me to be the director of the Wesley Evening Food Pantry for almost eight years. From the Wesley volunteers to the tens of thousands of people who have come for food, each of you have contributed to my faith journey and my call to feed our neighbors.

In the last eight years I have learned to trust God in a way I had not before. From the first time I ordered food for 900 people and it fed 1400, to the grace with which people coming for food have served their neighbors as I would like to be treated.

Thank you to every one of you who has been on this journey with me. I pray that God will be with you in all that you do and that you will share your abounding love with the hungry and hurting in this community and in the world.

Please welcome the new director, Katie Thomas, with the same support and encouragement you have giv-

en me. She brings different gifts which I believe will make the pantries even stronger than they are now.

While I will now be working with more than 200 pantries in the 14-county region, Wesley Evening Food Pantry and Wesley Pantry at Parkland College will always have a special place in my heart. Hunger is the largest solvable health problem in the world, and in our community. I pray I will continue to serve God by serving those who need food in my new role as Director of Partner Services at Eastern Illinois Foodbank and by teaching the next generation as adjunct faculty at the UI School of Social Work. I look forward to my return to Wesley for worship, study, and nourishment as a parishioner rather than staff person.



Peace,
Donna Camp

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

wesley evening 
FOOD PANTRY
1203 W. Green St.
Urbana, IL 61801