



LOAVES & FISHES

Groceries for Neighbors in Need

THE FISHNET

OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE A WEEK'S WORTH OF GROCERIES TO PEOPLE WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY FACING ECONOMIC HARDSHIPS.

www.loavesandfishes.org

POPPING UP TO SHARE THE GIFT OF GROCERIES



“That goes in the minivan for the family of three.” With a gallon of milk in one hand and a bag of apples and oranges in the other, Ruben Garcia of Atrium Health directs volunteers to bring over a box of food. Leaning over the minivan’s back seat, a young girl smiles as the groceries are loaded into her mom’s car.

In the next car, Tabitha buckles her daughter into her car seat. “This is a blessing,” she says. **“These are the things you need for your family.”**

This has been the scene all summer as **Loaves & Fishes Pop Up Food Shares** have been - quite literally - popping up to share free groceries with our neighbors in need. Thanks to a surplus

of **TEFAP** (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) food we receive through our friends at Second Harvest Food Bank, we began the Food Shares as a way to get these items into the hands of people who need it, as quickly and efficiently as possible. Food items have included apples, oranges, green peppers, potatoes, milk, eggs and meat as well as boxes of non-perishable items.

Atrium Health is helping to staff and host many of these weekly Food Shares while others are being held at churches, community fairs and partner agencies such as Goodwill Opportunity Campus and NC MedAssist. Since beginning in June, we have distributed the groceries to over 10,000 people!

FRESH IS BEST!

A top priority for Loaves & Fishes is to provide fresh, healthy foods and since last October, our pantries have distributed **187,000 lbs of fresh produce!** Now, thanks to a \$25,000 grant from **Novant Health**, we will be able to purchase a walk-in cooler for our warehouse. Add to that a \$20,000 grant from **Publix Supermarket Charities** for the purchase of larger glass front refrigerators for our pantries and we will be able to store and distribute **even more produce.** Thank you!



WORKING ON SOLUTIONS



Transportation has long been one of the toughest issues our food insecure families face. So, we are excited to share that we are partnering with our friends at Lyft to work on a solution. **Lyft has begun a 6-month pilot program** to provide 75 Charlotte families living in food deserts with subsidized travel to and from grocery stores, farmers markets and food pantries. The pilot is starting small by focusing on eligible residents living in the 28208 and 28216 zip codes. Data shows that these two zip codes have the highest rates of food insecurity in Mecklenburg County.

PRESCRIPTIONS FOR FOOD

This fall, **The Sucot Foundation** will become the home of our 37th food pantry and our first ever pantry in **Matthews**. This follows the opening earlier this year of two **Food Pharmacies**. In partnership with **One Charlotte Health Alliance (OCHA)**, these food pharmacies are located in medical clinics - Atrium Health Biddle Point Family Practice and Novant Health Movement Family Wellness Center. Clinicians, who screen patients for food insecurity, can now write a "prescription" of a food referral to Loaves & Fishes as well as provide instant access to food thanks to a Loaves & Fishes mini pantry located at each clinic.

"The most powerful medicine can be found at the end of your fork."

-Dr. Mark Hyman



“IF YOU GIVE ME A BAG, I’LL GIVE YOU HALF”



by Sue Loeser, Pantry Volunteer

Empathy was on my mind when I helped Jane (not her real name) as she shopped for her family of six. Jane was my dream client because she liked to cook and was searching for healthy options.

Jane was especially excited about an extra-large bag of salad greens she chose, exclaiming, “My daughters love salad...they will be thrilled!”

Just then, another client spied Jane’s bag of salad greens, pointed to it and said, “I’d like one of those!” “Oh, I’m so sorry,” I told this second client. “We had just two bags of salad greens and that’s the last one.” That would have been the end of it, except beside me Jane smiled and said to the young man, “If you give me a bag, I’ll give you half!”

Wow.

If you give me a bag, I’ll give you half. You have no idea how often I’ve wondered if I would share my family’s desperately-needed food—food I couldn’t replace—with another person in need. I can’t say for sure I would.

As a volunteer, I help clients select items from different food groups, using their family size to determine how many points (i.e. currency) they have in each food group.

As we shop together, I talk to my clients about food, and sometimes they move on to stories about their life and family. What I hear is often heartbreaking. While we bag their selections, it’s not uncommon for a client to weep with relief and gratitude on seeing all they have to take home to their family.

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Yet, in spite of their need, a client like Jane is not rare. I often hear clients say, “I have enough (vegetables, fruit, etc.) so I won’t take any more.” It would be easy to assume they refuse the items because they can’t carry more cans on the bus, or they don’t have storage at home. But almost always the client adds, “Leave it for the next person.”

SAVE THE DATE

Wednesday, May 13, 2020

LOAVES & FISHES



LUNCHEON OF

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Featuring Stephanie Land,
author of *Maid: Hard Work, Low Pay,
and a Mother’s Will to Survive*





LOAVES & FISHES
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Non-Profit
Organization
US Postage
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Permit #2492
Charlotte, NC

THE FISHNET NEWSLETTER



Thank you for investing in our kids!

Seven-year-old Layla, her mom and brother just moved out of Charlotte Family Housing into their first home. Thanks to you, they were able to stock the pantry shelves in their new home with healthy foods from Loaves & Fishes. Your donations provide groceries such as veggies, fruit, eggs, yogurt, fresh meat and bread that ensure kids like Layla and her brother go to school healthy and ready to learn! Thank you!

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