

Food Bank News

A Publication of the State College Area Food Bank • volume nine, issue 2 • Spring 2002

<http://hscouncil.centreconnect.org/Foodbank/>

The First Twenty Years

The State College Area Food Bank will celebrate its 20th anniversary in September 2002

Question: *What looks the same on the outside, but has changed dramatically on the inside since 1982?*

Answer: *The State College Area Food Bank.*

Ever since its formation in 1982, the Food Bank has been located in St. Andrew's Church on the corner of South Fraser Street and West Foster Avenue in "downtown" State College. That hasn't changed. But over the years, the activity level of the Food Bank operation inside the church has increased exponentially. In its first twelve months of operation, from September 1982 to September 1983, the Food Bank provided 315 orders of groceries (about 3 days' worth). During calendar 2001, in addition to providing food to all seven of Centre County's other food banks and serving as lead food pantry in the area, the Food Bank provided 1,732 orders (now at least a week's worth), an absolutely staggering increase.

How did this come about? Although some members of the State College community back in early 1982 thought a food bank was not needed, a group began planning. According to Hazel Patton, a member of the congregation at St. Andrew's Church and the first food bank coordinator, the recession of the early 1980s "made it evident that many persons required help . . . , and it was felt that a . . . community based and community supported (effort) was . . . doable." Marion Whitmore, a "first" volunteer from the congregation at St. Andrew's who still volunteers at the Food Bank, stresses this independent spirit: "We did what we could, without waiting for some governmental agency to do it for us."

This group of planners faced a dilemma: How to provide a service which would be as hassle-free as possible? How could the proposed food bank avoid extensive "checking up" on the eligibility of clients? The answer was brilliantly simple: to require that each food bank client be referred by another social service agency or religious congregation. This eventually brought the Food Bank into contact with most of the existing social service agencies and religious groups in Centre County.

Hazel Patton remembers Monday, September 13, 1982, very clearly. This was the day the Food Bank opened in the basement of St. Andrew's Church — and nobody came. The three assembled volunteers were disappointed, thinking of the \$342 worth of purchased groceries and the cartons of donated food in the adjoining room. They wondered if the doubters were right.

The answer turned out to be a resounding "no." It took a little time for word about the new food bank to spread by word of mouth. The planning group had imagined they might serve "as many as 100 clients" that first year, but in fact, they served far more.

Enjoying "incredible support" from the community, the Food Bank grew and grew over the next twenty years.

Some Food Bank Milestones

- In 1985, becomes a United Way Agency and hires its first paid part-time coordinator.
- In 1989, the Boy Scouts sponsor the first local (and overwhelmingly successful) "Scouting for Food" drive, now a tradition.
- In 1996, becomes a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit agency. The part-time Food Bank coordinator now a full-time executive director. The Food Bank moves its center of operation from the Church undercroft to the Parish Life Center, incorporating the Clothes Closet into its operation.
- In 1997, in recognition of the complexities of managing a volunteer work force, the Food Bank hires its second paid staff member, a part-time volunteer coordinator.
- In 2002, Ernest Boyd becomes the Food Bank's first full-time assistant director (see page 2).

It is now clear that the Food Bank performs an increasingly essential community service. Pat Coble, the present Executive Director, estimates that services have increased an average of 35% in the months since September 11. The State of Pennsylvania, currently in financial trouble, is planning to cut back its support of food programs. Meanwhile the need is increasing every day. Keep tuned!





Food Sharing and Human Essence

by Ernest Boyd

Greetings to all! Before moving to State College, where my wife teaches in Penn State's Visual Studies Program, I worked for the South Plains Food Bank in Lubbock, Texas, and taught at South Plains Community College.

My graduate studies were in Ancient History and Paleanthropology, which convinced me of the important role of

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food and food sharing in human development. For

decades it was generally accepted that the human inclination to use and develop tools accounted for our advancements. But I became persuaded that the human peculiarity of food sharing was the factor that accounted for human development. Adult males tended to hunt animals and the women gathered fruits, roots,



Our new Assistant Director Ernest Boyd, Carola Rohrbaugh (Board President) and Pat Coble (Executive Director).

seeds and other food. Unlike other primates, humans brought their finds back to a central location. This promoted language development, as elders who were no longer physically able to assist in food gathering remained in the central location with the young, whom they educated by story telling. Since women gatherers brought seeds back to the group's location, whether it was permanent or not, they eventually discovered agriculture. This development paved the way for civilization and empire. Therefore food sharing, in my view, is the essence of being human. So the next time you participate in a food drive or make an individual contribution to the Food Bank, remember that such acts are the most basic expression of humanity.

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The Food Bank Unveils a New Web Site!

The State College Area Food Bank has just unveiled a redesigned Web site at

<http://hscouncil.centreconnect.org/Foodbank/>

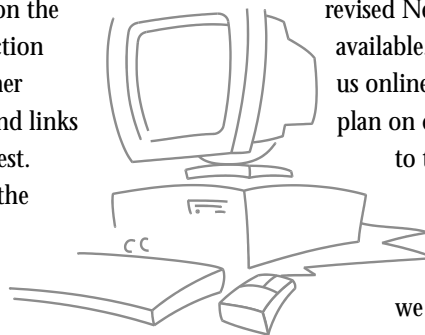
Note: There is no "www" in this Web address.

Connect, "a comprehensive, countywide website of nonprofit, government and educational information (formerly Countrystore.org)."

The new site will be updated frequently as information about upcoming Food Bank events and

Our Web site now provides visitors with a wealth of information about the Food Bank, including a current "Needs List," featured prominently on the site home page. Site visitors can also learn more about the many ways they can volunteer to help the Food Bank or how to make donations. Copies of our client and donor

newsletters can even be found on the site! And a "Hunger Links" section provides information about other Centre County food pantries and links to additional Web sites of interest. Developed and maintained by the Food Bank Publicity Committee, the site is generously hosted by Centre



revised Needs Lists are available. Please visit us online . . . and plan on coming back to the site on a regular basis to see what we are up to!

A screenshot of a web browser window displaying the homepage of the Food Bank of the State College Area, Inc. The browser's address bar shows the URL: http://hscouncil.centreconnect.org/Foodbank/index.html. The page features a navigation menu on the left with links for Home, Needs List, Upcoming Events, About the Food Bank, Making Donations, Volunteer!, Newsletters, and Hunger Links. The main content area includes a welcome message, a current needs list for April/May 2002 (listing items like Canned Fruits, Low Sodium Vegetables, Peanut Butter, Coffee & Tea, Toilet Tissue, and Disposable Diapers), and upcoming events such as a Letter Carrier Food Drive and Empty Bowls. A photograph of food supplies is shown next to the needs list. The footer of the page states: "We are a member agency of the Centre County United Way".

Food Bank Receives Grant Funding

In January, we responded to an invitation to apply for one-time-only funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation whose Trustees had established a \$10 million fund to aid post-September 11th relief efforts in 26 U.S. communities. In February, we were delighted to learn that we would receive a \$20,000 grant award from this fund. The award could not have been more timely. The

demand for our services rose dramatically following the events of September 11th and remain, on average, 35% higher than for comparable time periods a year ago. In response to this heightened demand, we had already increased the number of services we provide our clients and upgraded our sole staff position from part-time to full-time, adjustments which had a significant impact on our proposed

budget for 2002. Thanks to this award and to the continued strong support of our community, we are now confident that we will be able to fully meet the needs of our clients and provide support to the other food pantries in Centre County during these difficult times.

The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation promotes excellence in journalism worldwide and invests in the vitality of 26 U.S. communities.



A Member Agency of the Centre County United Way

<http://hscouncil.centrecconnect.org/foodbank/>
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