

Fundraising appeal published by the Wakefield Observer in December 2002

"Hooray!" she said, clapping her hands in excitement. The little girl was not responding to a new toy or special treat, but to a box of food her Mom was picking up from the Wakefield Interfaith Food Pantry. Another child exclaimed, "Is that all for us?" And a young mother of two who, along with her husband, had recently been laid off quietly said, "I didn't know what I was going to do about the holiday."

The Wakefield Interfaith Food Pantry (WIFP) has been providing emergency food throughout the year and holiday baskets to our neighbors in need since 1982. This year, WIFP provided Thanksgiving baskets, turkeys and certificates for perishable foods for the holiday to 45 families or individuals in need, enabling more than 160 people, including 38 families with children, to enjoy a holiday meal on Thanksgiving and have food for the holiday weekend. With the help of the community, WIFP anticipates assisting at least as many people during the Christmas holiday season.

In addition to the holiday baskets and gift certificates, WIFP has helped more than 170 households since January 2002, with 67 of those households coming to the food pantry for the first time. Some of these households only came to the food pantry once or twice; but others have a continuing need. Overall, WIFP has provided individuals and families with enough food to feed more than 1,300 people for four to five days in 2002. And the year is not yet over.

In the next few weeks, we will be sharing the stories of some of the individuals and families who have been helped by the community through the Wakefield Interfaith Food Pantry, both at holiday times and during the rest of the year. A number of these folks have lost their jobs or have used up their unemployment benefits. Others just can't make ends meet due to any number of circumstances - health issues, long-term disabilities, fixed incomes, and rising expenses. People of all ages and backgrounds. People who are your neighbors.

Thank you in advance for your support of the Gifts of Hope program. "The need in Wakefield is growing because of the economic situation. But, I have faith that we will be able to meeting the growing requests for assistance. Wakefield is a very generous community.

Donations to Gifts of Hope should be made payable to Wakefield Interfaith Food Pantry, designated as a Gift of Hope, and sent directly to:

Gifts of Hope
C/O The Wakefield Observer
152 Sylvan St.
Danvers, MA 01923

Please do not make your checks or money orders payable to this newspaper or Gifts of hope, as that will delay disbursement efforts.