

Quotes from agencies funded by Empty Bowls, April, 2014

(the quotes are copied from their funding applications for 2014)

1. Bartlett House

The generosity of Empty Bowls funding has allowed us the ability to purchase items that we typically do not see come in in the form of donations (perishable items). Bartlett House is very fortunate to receive donations of prepared foods from WVU Dining Services as well as the recipient of several food drive items throughout the year. Although these items assist us throughout the year in providing meals to our clients, on-going perishable items such as milk, cheeses, meats, eggs are difficult to collect through drives due to the perishable nature of the items as well as the significant quantities needed to supply the shelter. Empty Bowls funding has bridged countless funding gaps in providing these much needed items to homeless individuals and families.

Due to Federal Funding cuts, Bartlett House has suffered some significant reductions in Federal funding. Operational dollars such as funding for food items help offset many of these cuts. On behalf of the Board of Directors, the staff and most especially the clients, we thank you for your past support of our agency and for your consideration of our request.

Keri DeMasi, Executive Director

2. Canyon Presbyterian Church Food Pantry

With your funding we have been able to hand out more than pastas, cereals, canned goods and the like. We can offer frozen ground beef or sausage, margarine, eggs, cheese, canned meats and fish, more canned milk, flour, sugar, baking mix. We'd like to add more fruit juices. Also we receive limited items for special diets and would like to be able to purchase whole wheat pastas, salt free items, sugar free products, whole wheat crackers, etc. We have been able to provide a more well rounded offering of items.

Our church is small. It provides the venue for the pantry and the utilities but we depend on volunteer workers and donations. We have no government programs.

Virginia Justice, Canyon Food Pantry

3. Caritas House

(Empty Bowl) Funds allow the pantry to remain fully stocked for distribution to individuals/families seeking assistance. Caritas House facilitates FEED the Hungry a community meal one Sunday per month feeding at least 60 and up to 86 people each meal. Food items purchased with EB funds were distributed as well as 3 hot meals each day. Funds have increased stock in the pantry to include more fruits and vegetables as well as meat products, funds also leave other funds available to purchase hygiene and cleaning products with other funds.

Additional Comment from Caritas House: Volunteers from the Board of Directors, staff and community work to ensure everyone receives meals, food supplies, as well as EPAKs for those living outdoors. During July 60 individuals completed survey instruments, female 23, male 37 with 18 children. As a member of the West Virginia Coalition to End Homelessness this agency conducted a point-in-time survey serving 340 meals during this count.

City of Morgantown is registered in the HUD 100,000 Homes campaign to identify and house homeless or at-risk individuals/families to provide housing. HUD mandate included a 3 day count with extensive survey materials to complete for acceptance in this program. Caritas House provided meals, food, hygiene products, coats, gloves, hats, blankets to all participants during the last week of January 2014. 7 meals were provided to 70+ people 13 EPAKs were distributed and countless cold weather items were available. More than 1380 volunteer hours were attributed to Caritas House feeding efforts with the homeless population. Clients receiving other assistance such as rent, utility, mileage and Case management live in northern West Virginia with household income levels 80% or below FPL. Empty Bowls funds are very essential to operation of our food and meal services.

Sharon Wood, Caritas House

4. Catholic Charities WV Central Region's Monongalia County Wellness Works Food Pantry

With Empty Bowls' funding in the past, we have been able to educate and provide food items that meet special dietary requirements. We have heard success stories from our patrons where they have been able to lose weight, decrease blood pressure medication, decrease cost of diabetic supplies because they have controlled their sugar and learned how to eat on a gluten-free diet. These special dietary items tend to be more expensive so individuals have not even tried them in the past. With past funding, we have been able to provide these items and make a difference in our patron's health.

Food assistance in general is a vital basic need. Too many families live with food insecurity. Many times, when individuals and families are struggling to make ends meet, health food items are the first thing they reduce or eliminate. They tend to go to cheaper processed foods, which in turn causes more health issues and an increase in usage of emergency medical services. Lack of healthy or enough food affects children and adults. Individuals in the situation can experience a lack of focus, energy and vitality which seriously affects performance at school, home life and work. We provide that food, especially the healthy alternatives, thus improving the nutritional well-being of our vulnerable neighbors in the short-term. We help eliminate one worry so an individual can focus on another area of their life. In addition, we provide education on how to manage and control chronic health conditions. We also honor the dignity of each individual by providing privacy and choices.

Patricia Phillips, Director of Development & Marketing

5. Food Pantry/Christian Help, Inc.

Every request for funding through the Empty Bowls Foundation has been to provide a much needed items for the pantry, whether it is for peanut butter, tuna, or cereal and milk for children.

Every food order contains at least one jar of peanut butter. Larger families receive more, based on the number of individuals in the household. (Larger households receive two or even three jars of peanut butter, depending on the size of the family.) That means that the Food Pantry program spent at least \$4,269.06 for a family of two to keep up with client needs for peanut butter alone. To fill the shelves of the food pantry, the Food Pantry Coordinator shops at Aldi where prices have proven to be consistently low.

It should be noted that in 2012 the price of peanut butter increased to \$3.59 per jar, based on the availability and productivity of peanut crops. Unfortunately, in our current economic market, it is not unreasonable to suspect that this trend will soon carry over into other food items, further increasing the cost of maintaining the Food Pantry program.

Christian Help, Inc. is a grassroots organization located in the heart of downtown Morgantown. Founded in 1975, CHI serves the residents of north central West Virginia and the surrounding areas with five unique programs that are one-hundred percent free and open to the public.

Through the generous support of our community, we have been able to meet the needs of our friends and neighbors, with an astounding \$0.93 of every dollar donated being used in direct aid to clients. Whether in financial assistance or food orders, free clothing or household items, or even in the services of our Career Closets as individuals try to achieve greater success in the workplace, our programs have helped strengthen and support the individuals and families of the Morgantown area who have few alternatives in their time of crisis. Every one has a story unique to them and their circumstance, and every one has a place and an advocate at CHI. We truly embody our slogan, "faith in action," every single day. And our greatest strength lies in our approach to service--client advocacy.

It truly might not seem like much, to say we offer peanut butter and tuna to our clients. But while being an easy meal to prepare, it is also a meal that easily fills the bellies of hungry children and loved ones. At CHI, we consciously balance the cost of items against their nutritional value, to make the most of our resources and provide the greatest benefit to our clients. It is not always the easiest line to walk, but we do the best we can to provide all our families with well-balanced, satisfying meals. A peanut butter or tuna sandwich provides a great source of protein and dietary fiber. And when our families are able to focus on something besides their hunger, they are better able to go out and accomplish whatever the day has in store for them.

Food insecurity is a real issue that faces many of our friends, family and neighbors each and every day. As the economy continues to shift and change, gas prices go up and unemployment rates rise and fall, it is not always easy for families to meet all of their financial obligations with the resources available to them. Too often, they must make a choice between paying the rent or buying groceries. Stretch and pull as they might, there simply is not enough to make ends meet.

There are no limits to hunger. Regardless of appearance or gender, education or employment, hunger can befall anyone at any time. That is precisely why the Food Pantry program at CHI is so important. Because we do not utilize commodities, we are able to serve anyone who comes to us in need. This may include the homeless, or the working disadvantaged. But it might also include international students and professors at the university, who came to the United States with nothing besides a bit of clothing. More and more frequently, clients also include working professionals who have never had to seek help before, but an unexpected medical bill or automotive repair put a stress on their finances. We see veterans living on a pension, and we see young adults barely over the age of 18 trying to make it on their own for the first time. Our clients are as varied in age and race as they are in their personal circumstances. Only one thing remains the same among them: the basic human need for food.

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Cheryl Callen, Executive Director

6. Free Sunday Community Breakfast / First Presbyterian Church, Morgantown

The local Empty Bowls program originated at First Presbyterian Church, Morgantown in 2007 as a way to raise funds to support our "Pancake Breakfast," the free, hot breakfast that we serve to everyone who comes, every Sunday morning. Results of the 2007 program put our breakfasts on a firmer financial basis. While our breakfast attendance has declined somewhat since 2012, food costs have risen. Without continued Empty Bowls funding, the breakfasts we serve would be less substantial.

The free Sunday breakfast, or "Pancake Breakfast," at First Presbyterian Church, Morgantown started more than 20 years ago primarily in order to provide people who are homeless in Morgantown with a nutritious, hot meal on Sunday mornings. The breakfasts are cooked and served by volunteers from the church and from the community beyond. We serve everyone who comes. Beyond the unquestioned importance of nutrition, the support that Empty Bowls Monongalia provides for the free Sunday breakfast is fostering a changing sense of community. Regular breakfast guests are often recognized by name by many church members. Other guests receive a friendly nod. People who would be unlikely to cross paths in the common course of events have made use of the "Pancake Breakfast" as an opportunity to interact in a mutually comfortable environment. As breakfast guests and as church members we are expanding our ideas of who "belongs" in our Morgantown community.

Chris McClelland

7. Covenant EMC Food Pantry

Empty Bowls has made a difference in being able to purchase more meats, Mountainer Food Bank does supply us with a lot of canned goods, but we need to buy rice, cereal, peanut butter. For the past two years we have taken part with Mobile Food Pantry. The Food Bank brings in 10,000 pounds of meat, bakery items and produce. We pay \$250.00 and our clients would like to see this every month. The money from Empty Bowls allows us to sponsor more of these pantries.

Marlene Tennant

8. Morgantown Meals on Wheels

Simply put, Empty Bowls funding helps to keep the meals going out to our clients. Many can not afford the \$5.00 meal fee. All meals are subsidized to some extent because the cost of providing a meal at the current time is about \$7.37/ meal. The difference in actual cost for everyone and those who cannot afford the full fee has to be covered and this is where all of our donation money goes. Actual meal cost/day averages \$626.45. Actual meal cost charged/day is \$385.00 so our donors subsidize \$241.45 every day

Linda Justice, Financial Secretary

9. Morgantown Community Kitchen

The funds from Empty Bowls fill a gap between food donations and foods that need to be purchased. Fresh fruit and vegetables are served on a regular basis and the EB grant allows us to purchase these items. A recent shortage in donations to the Community Kitchen has been fresh meat. We will use the money to supplement the lack of fresh meat donations. The recent increase in daily meals served includes the increase in the number of families with small children. We make every attempt to serve nutritionally balanced meals to all clients and it is even more important now that we are serving more children.

Karen Mercer, Board President

10. Rock Forge Presbyterian Church Food Pantry

If we did not get Empty Bowls funding we could not keep our food pantry open. We get funds every other year from the Presby. for the food pantry. We do participate in the Food and Hunger program and we get food from this.

We are very appreciative of any and all funding from Empty Bowls. The number of people at Rock Forge Church is now around 10-15 people so the church cannot afford to provide funds. They allow us to use the building but we need to pay for the electricity and repairs. We do get some donations from individuals and with this we purchase cleaning supplies and some hygiene products. Without Empty Bowls we would have to close. We are so thankful to participate.

Brenda Hails

11. Sarah's Table

Our guests at Sarah's Table vary in age, gender and circumstances. Some are homeless: families with young children and men and women with a variety of medical and social issues. Some guests have a place to live but need good, balanced meals and companionship. Empty Bowls allows us to serve them healthy meals in a safe, welcoming environment. With EB funding Sarah's Table can remain a reliable support in their personal networks as well as to the Morgantown community at large.

Marjorie McCawley

12. Scotts Run Backpack Program

Funding from Empty Bowls in the past has been utilized at Scotts Run for a variety of programs and services. We have used the funding to purchase food for our Food Pantry and for the Backpack Weekend Feeding program. Both of these programs are very important to us and the community. Our Food pantry is the largest food pantry in Monongalia County, we served just under 7,000 individuals in 2013. The Backpack program continues to grow as well, we are currently packing 869 bags a week serving 6 of the Elementary Schools and have been talking to Suncrest Primary and Ridgdale to add them in the fall. Teachers at these schools have been so excited about being able to send children home for the weekend knowing that they will eat before returning on Monday mornings. They have told us that they notice a difference in performance in the children as well as behaviors. Food insecurities affect even the smallest of children and this program helps even the young ones not yet enrolled

Lisa McMorrow

13. St. Ursula's Food Pantry

EB Funding has helped me meet our budget for produce in the pantry and provided money for formula and baby food when we run out of donations. With EB money I can buy 2 or 3 fresh produce items where in past years I rarely bought any because our budget was so tight. We have a single mom in chemotherapy for breast cancer. Her nutritionist wants her to eat yellow and green vegetables. This pantry I had nice apples and sweet potatoes and I was able to double up on the sweet potatoes because I had enough. Although we are in a cycle of babies who aren't requiring special, expensive formula, we could get one who needs Alimentum or Pro-Sobee (\$28 and \$19 a can).

We have seen our pantry population go from a senior population to younger families. The younger families have children through the teen years. During school breaks and summertime, these kids aren't getting meals at school so we give more in our boxes for them. The other thing I want to mention are the comments we get from families who get the fresh produce. There are words like "My kids love apples", "We like sweet potatoes at our house", or the kids who come to pantry will ask if they can have an apple in the car. Another mention I want you to be aware of is the homeless you asked about. We have 3 young men who are definitely homeless. One has been living in a trailer with no electricity or running water. I was happy to be able to give him some healthy food and fill his stomach. The other 2 young men live in a car in a friend's driveway. Not a decent place to sleep, but they at least had food. The thing is, technically we have no less than 23 homeless as defined by the homeless coalition. If you can't live in a home with a solid roof and safe wiring, at least some nutritious food can get you through some difficult minutes in your life.

Suzanne Kenney, Executive Director

14. The Rack (WVU Student Food Pantry)

The Funds from Empty Bowls has allowed us to make much needed purchases of food that is not available from the Mountaineer food bank such as condiments, baking goods, seasoning and other small household food items.

Empty Bowls is a vital resource that embraces community service and giving back to the agency that assist those suffering from food insecurity. To see the organization work so diligently for a program to assist so many others.

Jacqueline Dooley

15. Wadestown Food Pantry

The \$2,000 we received last year was very helpful keeping our shelves stocked during times of hardship. We very much appreciated receiving the funds.

The funds we requested this year will not only help us keep our pantry stocked with food but will allow us to diversify the food we have available and purchase some additional refrigerated and frozen items to better provide more nutritional items for our clients.

Phyllis Bruce