

## **UPDATE FROM TOPSS**

February 17, 2020

The Mission and Outreach Committee of Oxford Presbyterian Church  
Friends at Oxford Presbyterian Church:

Greetings. I last wrote you on January 6, 2020. Since then, I have had an opportunity to complete my databases for 2019 food and volunteer hour donations to TOPSS. So, I wanted to begin my update letter with a sincere thank you for the considerable generosity of your congregation. I know you allot a certain amount of money each month to a significant donation. During the last few months, I have asked for donations of cold cereal and oatmeal, because those are basic grain staples that are expensive for us to buy, and personal items, such as shampoo and feminine hygiene products, because our customers are unable to purchase those with SNAP benefits. During calendar year 2019, your congregation donated 4,036 pounds of food and personal items, which is about 3% of total donations. We are so grateful for your generosity and continuing commitment. In terms of volunteer hours, I can only track your congregation's contributions by looking at volunteer hours when you come as a group representing the Church. In July, groups of 11 people came for 2 hours on two separate Saturdays, for a total of 44 hours. As I hope I expressed to them in person, they were very helpful to me. This was soon after I had taken over as Executive Director, and they were especially helpful in organizing items in our storage room and kitchen, as well as performing routine cleaning and stocking duties. And although I cannot track your congregation's contributions of labor through individual volunteering, I have very much enjoyed working with Jens, Amy and Lawrence Bartel, beginning in early November. They were active participants in recent volunteer training sessions, and I look forward to their continued labor.

I am also writing to update you on our upcoming move. In January, I wrote the following: "In March or April of 2020, we will move to co-locate with the Family Resource Center, renting Buildings 1 and 3 of their property. This move will provide us with more space so that we can expand our nutrition-related services, for example, to hopefully sponsor after-school programming that will feature healthy snacks and exercise, provision of nutrition-related information, and involvement in gardening, with mentoring by Nutrition students at Miami and our staff. Co-locating will also allow us to more closely collaborate with the Family Resource Center to better serve our shared customer base. We will hold an open house to welcome the community to our new location. We anticipate having no disruption of service to our customers with the move. Finally, this move will give us some time to plan and conduct a more comprehensive fund-raising campaign for the new facility."

That move is imminent. We have spent January painting, laying new flooring, and receiving a room divider that will provide security for the pantry shopping area. We don't yet have a specific date for the move, but we are on schedule, and we will contact you if we need help with the move. And, of course, the open house for the pantry will be advertised widely. Funding of the renovation has been supported by a generous grant from a local philanthropic organization.

We welcome further collaboration with your committee as we move forward with our plans. I am very much looking forward to our meeting on February. 18. You'll be hearing from me again in two months time.

Sincerely

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