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Pantry Plunderers Aren't Pirates

A few years ago, I struggled financially. There were days that I would save food from my lunches at school to eat at home. I was in a bad spot. But one day, I learned of an amazing program: the BCMS/HS Pantry. I signed up to begin going to this pantry in hopes of a little bit of food to help get through the week like I used to get during elementary school, but my mind was blown at how far my school had gone to help students like myself. In this pantry, there were multitudes of clothes meant to be given out to students, not only were there enough clothes to dress the whole school, but there was also so. Much. Food. There were shelves on shelves full of food, and as someone who had essentially been living on ramen, rice, and oatmeal, it was heaven on earth. I asked the person who was there running the program if I was able to take what I needed, and I was able to leave the pantry that day with 4 bags of food. That day, my family had an amazing home-cooked meal for the first time in a long time.

If you have ever been to the pantry, you would probably know the person who started it all, and her name to us (the pantry pirates) is Ms. Lea. I sat down with Ms. Lea today during my lunch hour and asked her some questions. This is what she said. The main purpose of this pantry program is, "To help any student that feels like basic needs aren't being met." For example, the pantry provides food, clothes, personal hygiene products, and school supplies. The program is 10 years old and recently got a real room to operate from. The thing Ms. Lea is most proud of regarding the program is, "How accepted the program has become with the students, staff, and community. The program gets a lot of support from the community." Although the program is widely accepted, the pantry's largest setback and problem is, "Finding funding. Over time continued support and grants get harder and harder to find." I also asked Ms. Lea how much

\$100 would help the pantry and this is what she said, “ \$100 helps, a lot. It would tremendously contribute to the weekly food orders that have been getting expensive recently.”

The BCMS/HS pantry is a nonprofit organization run by the Boyne City Public School system that's meant to help students who are having hard times financially. They serve roughly 100 students weekly and all but one person who is a part of the pantry program are volunteers. As a student who has had their life drastically changed by this program, I cannot think of any group of people that would be more worthy to get a \$100 donation than the Boyne City Middle School/High School Pantry. The people in this program are as nice as possible and very respectful. This program has changed the lives of many many students, and I pray that it may continue to grow and help those who are in need during desperate times.