



# THE CORNER FOOD PANTRY NEWS

## Our So(u)rcerers - They Make the Magic Happen



Among our suppliers, **Earth's Palate Farm** stands out: Since 2017, co-owner **Renée Giroux** runs **NWCT Food Hub**, connecting 30 area farmers and their produce with wholesale buyers "who want to know where their food comes from." Giroux's greenhouses yield lettuce all winter, with up to 200 heads per week going to The Corner Food Pantry. Summer brings a bumper crop of fruit and vegetables. The reward for 80 hour work-weeks? "Farmers working together instead of against each other," says Giroux. Her husband, Kevin MacPherson, is also a pastry chef known for his croissants and hand-made chocolates, available at their farm store in Warren on Saturday mornings.

We have a nickname for the butchers in the meat department of **BJ's** in **Torrington**: We call them our "Knights of the Knives." **Ed, Mark and Joe** are equipped with chain mail gloves and ultra sharp blades. The crew proved to be a reliable source of chicken, even when poultry was extremely tough to come by during the pandemic. At our request, the men now cut and wrap up to 300 individual servings of pork chops when we order them - all while giving us the best price they can find. A tremendous amount of extra work for the dedicated team; they are firmly committed to our goal of putting a dent into food insecurity in Connecticut's Northwest Corner.



With **Q Farms**, **Linda and James Quella** established a reputation for the outstanding taste of their grass-fed cattle, sheep, chicken and cage-free eggs. For the past three years, the enterprising couple have shared the harvest generated from their property near Sharon Mountain with generous donations to The Corner Food Pantry. To further strengthen access to healthy food in our region, the Quellas plan to lease 40 acres to livestock breeders and vegetable growers on favorable terms - including the superb infrastructure that is already in place, from water supply and electricity to storage coolers. Their new nonprofit **Tri Corner FEED** is designed to support both local food producers and food pantries. "It's a double bottom line."

*"Whether we are giving or receiving help, each one of us has something valuable to bring to this world. That's one of the things that connects us as neighbors - in our own way, each of us is a giver and a receiver." ~ Fred Rogers*



**Adamah** is the Hebrew word for soil and the name of the farming venture of the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in Falls Village. For the past 12 years, **Janna Siller** has been teaching her passion for growing vegetables to twenty to thirty visiting fellows a year. They come from all over the country and help Siller produce 7,000 pounds of food per season for local pantries, on top of 12,000 pounds for the center's CSA and another 10,000 for consumption in their own dining hall. Fellows also learn about subjects like ecology, cheesemaking, pickling, and community building. "Some go back to be lawyers or whatever they were before they came here, and some have gone on to be farmers."

For **LaBonne's Market**, community outreach is an important cornerstone of their family-run business, now in its sixth generation. That commitment includes partnering with TCFP. On a weekly basis, our



volunteers place an order at the Salisbury store for food staples such as fresh milk, bread, bananas and more - items that make up our basic menu. We simply could not run our program without the support that the entire staff, including dairy manager **Veronica**, general manager **Eric** and the head of the produce department **Kevin**, give us. On top of their service, LaBonne's sponsors a yearly Charity Golf Tournament. Proceeds go to pantries in the towns where LaBonne's stores are located - a fun way to contribute to a great cause.

## By the Numbers

In 2022, an average of 96 families came to the pantry every week, representing more than 400 individuals. In the first quarter of 2023, the number of households climbed to 115 a week, a 20% increase over 2022. We are seeing a consistent uptick in the number of new families from our surrounding towns registering each week. Our cost and the demand for volunteers have gone up considerably, and we are counting on your support. Without your donations, the pantry couldn't function. Thank you.

To be a volunteer, go to [www.thecornerfoodpantry.org](http://www.thecornerfoodpantry.org) and click on 'Get Involved.'

### Yearly Statistics

	2021		2022	% Increase
Total Family Visits	3,978	→	4,798	+ 21%
Total Individuals	16,218	→	20,352	+25%
Total Meals	146,000	→	183,200	+25%
Weekly Volunteers	32	→	42	+30%
<b>Total Cost</b> of Food/ Personal Care Products	\$119,962	→	\$179,468	<b>+50%</b>



## Our Hours of Operation:

Fridays from 3PM - 4:30PM  
Saturdays from 9AM - 10AM

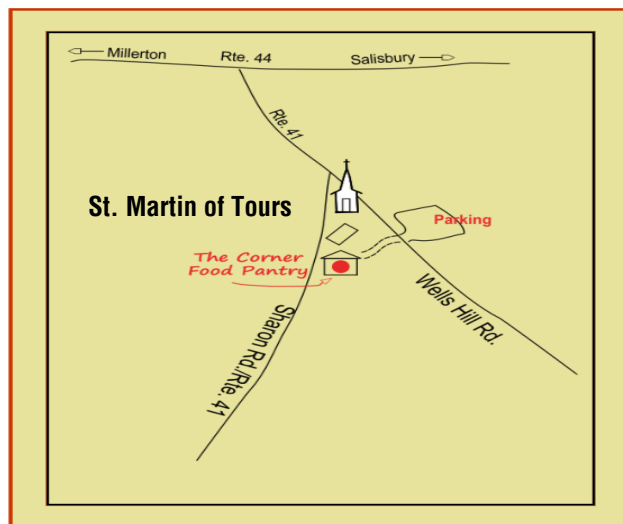
## Where We Are

We are located next to the Rectory of St. Martin of Tours Church in Lakeville. Customers enter from the parking lot across Wells Hill Road, and exit on Sharon Road (Rt. 41). To learn more about The Corner Food Pantry and about joining our wonderful team, go to

[www.thecornerfoodpantry.org](http://www.thecornerfoodpantry.org)

## More Mad Gratitude!

The food we distribute comes from many different businesses, organizations and individuals. Space constraints do not permit us to feature more of our suppliers in this newsletter. Our gratitude extends to Animal Farm Foundation, The Congregational Church of Salisbury, Hotchkiss Farm, Porsche Club of America/CT Valley Region, Ridgway Farm, St. John's Episcopal Church, Salisbury Central School, Stock the Shelves, Sunday in the Country, Trinity Church - and all of our friends and neighbors.



They have already made a lasting impact: **Sarah Gunderson, Leona Elhadj and Joffre Andrade** joined the Board of The Corner Food Pantry over the past eight months.

## Welcome Aboard!

**Sarah** has been instrumental in bringing us up to digital par by setting up the online volunteer sign-up portal. She enjoys the feeling of camaraderie at the pantry, and wanted to "be a member of an impressive team."

**Leona** is working full speed on updating and streamlining the pantry's financial operations. She says she "could not turn down the opportunity to have an impact and help grow the pantry's mission of providing food to those in need."

As the first pantry customer on the board and its first male member, **Joffre's** unique viewpoint helps us refine and improve what we do. "The transition to being a board member has been a simple one," he tells us.

"I enjoy being able to help out the local community."

# A Shoutout to Our Student Volunteers!

As part of their high school community service programs, eager helpers from Housatonic Valley Regional High School in Falls Village, Torrington High School, Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic High School in Poughkeepsie, The Hotchkiss School in Lakeville, Salisbury School and Indian Mountain School in Salisbury, chip in their time on a regular basis. Among their assignments are stocking shelves, refrigerators and freezers, greeting clients in any weather, and loading heavy bags into the waiting cars. Matt Connell, now finishing his junior year at Salisbury School, participates several times a month. "I love contributing to the food pantry," he says.



Matt



Silas and Letitia

Kimberly Lalvay, a sophomore from Torrington High, makes good use of her fluent Spanish and calm demeanor to interact with the customers. Silas Tripp, a freshman at Housy, took over for his sister, Avery, after her graduation, and now continues the family tradition of helping us out accompanied by his mother, Letitia Garcia-Tripp. We cherish their enthusiasm as well as the lasting commitment and dedication of all our remarkable volunteers. Thank you all.



Kimberly

