

SHARE YOUR SURPLUS



donate to Friends of St. Martin de Porres
Food Pantry @ Holy Cross Catholic Church

www.HendersonParkGarden.org

Donated Garden Surplus Helps Feed Families



Volunteers L-R Mary Jean, Joan, Eva, Linda, Lourdes, and Jeannie.

By Susan Farrar, in her own words:

“Dedicating plots to growing food for the needy was always part of the plan for the Henderson Park Community Garden. The challenge was to find a local pantry that would accept fresh produce. We were delighted to discover that the Friends of St. Martin de Porres food pantry, so close to the garden, would welcome our food donations. Four of the 4x10 plots at the Henderson Park Community Garden are dedicated to raising food for the pantry. Garden volunteers plant and tend the plots, and harvest and deliver to the pantry twice a week. Many garden members donate food from their individual plots and home gardens, too.”

“From a large shed on the grounds of Holy Cross Catholic Church, families in need find nourishment every two weeks. A sign identifies the shed as the Friends of St. Martin’s Food Pantry. The official name of the ministry is Friends of St. Martin de Porres and it is the largest ministry at Holy Cross Catholic Church.

Led by Director Mike Hardin, Friends of St. Martin de Porres is a well-organized, efficient, all-volunteer ministry dedicated to feeding the homeless and needy in the Atlanta area.

Approximately 100 friendly and enthusiastic volunteers staff the pantry, picking up food and supplies, making deliveries, disbursing and packaging food for pickup, preparing lunches, managing inventory, registering and checking in customers, and more.

In addition to the food pantry operation, St. Martin de Porres volunteers serve the needy in other ways. Since 1982, they’ve provided free lunches to the homeless twice a month at the Atlanta Mission. In partnership with the



The food pantry shed

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DONATED GARDEN SURPLUS HELPS FEED FAMILIES
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Embry Hills United Methodist Church, Friends of St. Martin de Porres provides nutritious snacks to 175-200 needy students every week during the school year. The food ministry also shares the handiwork of volunteer knitters, whose goal is to knit 150 hats and 150 scarves each winter for distribution to the homeless, along with toiletries, sweatshirts, and other items of clothing.

The pantry's inventory resembles that of a retail establishment. The refrigerator is stuffed full of eggs, bologna, tortillas, cheese, and hot dogs. There are boxes of potatoes on the counters. In the shed, shelves are stocked with canned vegetables and meat, peanut butter, pasta, rice, and cereal. Cases of canned goods line the walls. Walk-in freezers hold hams, chickens, and more. The pantry even stocks ready-to-eat meals for the occasional homeless customer.

With some 1,800 registered households in its database, the food pantry serves 550-850 families per month in 12 zip codes: 30021 (Clarkston); 30047 (Lilburn); 30071 (Norcross); 30084 (Tucker); 30087 (Stone Mountain); 30093 (Norcross); 30319 (Brookhaven); 30338 (Dunwoody); 30340 (Doraville); 30341 (Chamblee); 30345 (Northlake); and 30360 (Doraville).

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Mike Hardin (right) with volunteer Ed at the pickup window



A typical box of staple goods

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Volunteers John and Harry



Boxes ready for customer pickup

DONATED GARDEN SURPLUS HELPS FEED FAMILIES
(from page 24)

To be eligible for the program, customers must register, show proof of residence, and meet income requirements (not to exceed established household income limits).

Friends of St. Martin de Porres is funded by donations from parishioners as well as revenue from fundraising events, such as the recent production of *The Sound of Music*, which featured a cast of 70.

The food that's given to needy families comes from a variety of sources. The pantry purchases between five and six thousand pounds of food each week from the Atlanta Community Food Bank. It also purchases from wholesalers and retailers. And it gladly accepts donated food. Its regular pickups include a nearby restaurant that donates its day-old bread.

Visiting the pantry and seeing the families who rely on it brings what is meant by 'food insecurity' into sharp focus. More than 50 million Americans live in households considered food insecure. Georgia's household food insecurity rate — 15.6% — is higher than the national average of 14.7%.

Those of you with vegetable gardens can do something to reduce food insecurity: you can share your surplus with the food pantry, where it will go to

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neighbors in need. The volunteers at St. Martin's food pantry are delighted to include fresh, homegrown produce in their customer packages.

When your garden's bounty exceeds what your family can consume - and your neighbors scatter as you approach with another load of zucchini - remember the food pantry.

Friends of St. Martin de Porres food pantry is located behind Holy Cross Catholic Church (off Chamblee Tucker Road) in the large shed directly across the rear parking lot from the administration building. The address is 3175 Hathaway Court, Atlanta, GA 30341. Pantry hours are Tuesday through Friday, 9:00-11:45 am."



One of four pantry plots in the Henderson Park Community Garden.



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