

10 for 10, That's How We Celebrate!

Choose to celebrate with us by donating 10 items to honor our 10 year anniversary!

BY TRACY SMITH, PROGRAM COORDINATOR, TUALATIN SCHOOLHOUSE PANTRY

You plant a seed, care for it, and watch it grow. That is what a handful of dedicated individuals and churches did almost 10 years ago. They saw a growing need in our community and did something about it. Now, 10 years later, you can see what can happen when you take something and care for it well.

In the beginning there was a food closet at Tualatin Seventh Day Adventist Church. It had been in operation for about 20 years and was open one day a week. Their desire to help those in need was noble and appreciated. They also had, and still have, a clothing closet (open Wednesdays) for the community. This original pantry was a joint effort by several churches in Tualatin, Sherwood and Wilsonville. They did wonderful work but the need in Tualatin alone, outgrew their capacity.

As the need grew, so did the desire to expand the 'closet' into a full fledge Food Pantry that would be able to feed all of those in need in our local community. The Tualatin Seventh Day Adventist Church, Tualatin United Methodist Church, Tualatin Presbyterian Church and Living Savior Lutheran Church worked together to make this expansion possible. Their common passion and teamwork birthed what is Tualatin School House Pantry. On October 25th, 2004, the doors opened in the basement of the old Tualatin

Elementary school on Boones Ferry Road. This was made possible by the generosity of the Tigard - Tualatin School District. The School District provided the space, utilities and support without cost. Hours were expanded to 3 days a week from just one and the drastic increase in square footage from the small closet enabled TSHP to be a shopping style pantry, which allows clients to select their own food, with the friendly assistance of one of our many dedicated volunteers.

Selecting their own foods to fit their allergy & dietary needs, their ethnic tastes, individual preferences and ready to eat foods for the homeless was an incredible option offered to our clients. The pantry grew from helping 100 families each month to helping 235 Families at the new pantry. This was a major improvement in quantity of food, numbers of families helped and better food selection

For five years, hundreds of families found the help they needed in their time of need. When the school district put the property on the market, TSHP started looking for new space. Rolling Hills Community Church (RHCC) heard of our

search and offered us an incredible space that we could not turn down. We knew that we would need to find a way to get food to those who could not find transportation (there is no public bus service to RHCC). If this was the only hold back, this was an easy fix. We do 6-12 deliveries each month and our shopping style pantry inspires clients to find rides with friends and family.

Fortunately we ended up at RHCC, grateful that money to rent commercial space could instead be spent on food for our clients. Due to the generosity of many local donors, we were able to install a walk-in refrigerator and freezer in this expanded space. This increased our ability to provide meat to our clients and we began purchasing fresh milk for every family seeking help at TSHP. The pantry also made the big decision to hire their first and only employee, part-time, to help coordinate the quickly growing number of volunteers, volunteer groups, donation pick-ups and client deliveries as well as other administrative tasks. When we moved from the School to Rolling Hills we were serving around 300 families each month. Now five years later we are serving over 600 families each month, over 700 in our busiest month, November! To our astonishment, TSHP gave out



over 712,000 pounds of food last year. That team of churches and individuals knew there was a need but I am sure they never foresaw just how great an impact they would have in the lives of thousands.

In 10 years, TSHP has never had to turn a family away due to lack of food (even as the number of clients rapidly grew with a major downturn in the economy). TSHP, in fact, has even been able to help our neighboring communities as well such as Lake Oswego, West Linn, Durham and Tigard. We celebrate the past 10 years with the thousands of clients helped, the thousands of volunteers who have dedicated hours, and the thousands of donors who have given so generously. How, you may ask, can we honor the past amazing years and celebrate the many years to come? We are hoping you will choose to celebrate with us by donating 10 items to honor our 10 year Anniversary! Please feel free to stop by during any of our pantry hours to tour the pantry and celebrate with us. You will find our friendly doors wide open for clients on Mondays 3-8pm, Wednesdays 10-3 and Fridays 10-3 at 3550 SW Borland Rd. Donation hours are longer, call for more info: 503.783.0721.