



Food Pantry News

Volume 6, Issue 3—September 2024



1971-2021

Our mission: To provide emergency food assistance to families of Plainfield who find themselves in need..

Meet the Board of Directors

Our executive director, Pat Bixel, (right) was appointed executive director at Star Fish, Inc., the parent organization for the Star Fish Food Pantry in 2020. She succeeded Marie Pase who served in that position for 10 years.

“To be asked to direct the Starfish Food Pantry is flattering, humbling and exciting,” said Patty at the time of her appointment. “With the support of a truly dedicated team of volunteers and our “Friends of Star Fish” supporters, I believe we can all continue to accomplish many good things.”

Pat is a retired educator and administrator, having last served at Mount St. Mary Academy in Watchung as director of the Guidance Department for 25 years. “While at Mount St. Mary’s, I advised a group of students who prepared sandwiches and snacks for the Salvation Army in Plainfield, and conducted a Cereal Bowl campaign for Star Fish every year. The students collected nearly 2000 boxes of cereal, with the room collecting the most each year earning the right to display the Cereal Bowl Trophy.

Pat and her late husband Dave were instrumental in founding the Hand in Hand Organization which brought together thousands of volunteers to Middlesex County College each May. Over the course of fifteen years, these volunteers shared in a day of activities and entertainment called the Hand in Hand Festival, designed for those considered cognitively or physically impaired.



Sharing her volunteerism at Star Fish arose during the seventeen years she and Dave lived in Plainfield. “Dave and I met the most generous, wonderful, fun-loving and energetic individuals we had ever met who believed in the dignity of each individual. They introduced us to Star Fish and all the good work its volunteers did for people. For the past forty years, I volunteered or financially contributed to their efforts whenever and however I could. Since my retirement

(Continued on page 3)

Board of Directors

Pat Bixel

Executive
Director



Michael Townley

Secretary



Kathleen Nitzsche

Treasurer



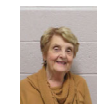
Sarah Mazzaresse

Statistician



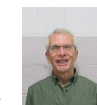
Catherine Renga

Chair
Holiday Meals



Jerry Zukowski

Chair
Food Procurement



Marie Pase, Board
Advisor

Newsletter

We welcome any
comments or
suggestions. Email us!

If you don't want to
receive emails from us,
opting out is easy—just
send an email to

Secretary@
starfishplainfield.org

Please forward to your
contacts.

Thanks to our helpers and supporters, and some recent prices—WOW!



An Aldi receipt (right) for a recent order of peanut butter and jelly—\$2,246.40. Giving Garden coordinator Bernadette with fresh vegetables ready to come to Star Fish. And a young helper storing canned chili for our weekly orders and the Plainfield Food Security Project.

ALDI
Store #36
907 Oak tree Ave Suite D
South Plainfield, NJ
833-460-8036
www.ALDI.us
Your cashier today was Robert

Peanut Butter	480 @	2.09	1003.20	FA
Grape Jelly	480 @	2.59	1243.20	FA
Debit			2246.40	

*****9672 PIN
08/29/24 10:57 Ref/Seq # 043020
Trace # 043020
Auth # 452403
AID A000000980840
TVR 8080048000
IAD 0601120321A000
TSI 6800 ARC 000 EntryMode 05
APPROVED

SUBTOTAL 2246.40
A-Taxable @0.00% 0.00
AMOUNT DUE \$ 2246.40
T O T A L \$ 2246.40
960 ITEMS
Debit Card \$ 2246.40

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Scan to
donate



GUEST CHECK

Date Table Guests Server 9299470

APPT-SOUP/SAL-ENTREE-VEG/POT-DESSERT-BEV

56 - eggs 12 560

\$560

YIKES! \$560 for 150 dozen
extra large eggs = \$3.74/doz.
All for the Plainfield Food
Security Project's families in
need of assistance.

As of 8/31, eggs are up to
\$5.49 per dozen!!

Help us offer fresh eggs - use
the QR code to donate now.

LOOK

WIN SONE

WS#0105C

During the summer, we have enjoyed the help of a number of high school students. They are especially welcomed on the days we bring 150 bags of food to the Plainfield Food Security Project.

Meet the Board of Directors (cont'd)

from the Mount, I became a more involved member of Star Fish by volunteering regularly in the food pantry.”

Other Board members are quick to point out what a dynamic leader Pat has proven to be over the past four years. “I have always been especially impressed with her work ethic and her personal drive to do whatever was necessary to help Star Fish succeed in our mission,” said Catherine Renga, another Board member. “She was always there for the volunteers and our clients, assisting packing food or sorting donations and storing them on the shelves. She is a remarkable worker and leader.”

Board secretary Michael Townley also commended Patty’s dedication. “We are truly blessed to have Patty as our director,” said Michael. “I am amazed at all of the people that Patty has brought to Star Fish to help. Through her many contacts, we always seem to have the help we need.”

Pat learned about service to others through her late parents, Mary and Walter. “I truly believe that in these times we should help our neighbors who experience food insecurity,” said Pat. “The number of people in the United States who lack the basic means of obtaining food is unfathomable. If we are able to help our neighbors secure food for their families or themselves, then it is up to us to do so. We are blessed at Star Fish with the friends and the resources that help make this mission achievable.”

Donations in Patty’s name or for general use can be made at our website, www.starfishplainfield.org, or by scanning the QR code.



Clockwise from Left—a staple of our weekly food orders are chicken thighs from Costco. Two high school helpers loaded the cart, then the car, and then carried the chicken to the pantry and loaded the freezer. Easy when you have help like that! This load will help 180 families!



Star Fish, Inc.

P.O. Box 2822

Plainfield, NJ 07062-0822

Phone: 908-755-8888

E-mail:

secretary@starfishplainfield.org

Donate at

www.starfishplainfield.org

Visit our website, click on the Contact or Donate link in the menu bar, and then click on the "Donate" button as shown below.



What is Star Fish?

We are a group of volunteers from Plainfield and the surrounding area who belong to a tax exempt, 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation in existence since 1971. Star Fish operates three days each week throughout the year, preparing and distributing grocery food orders to an average of thirty to thirty-five families in need each week.

Our primary function is to maintain the food pantry. Our volunteers pack and deliver grocery food orders to clients who have been referred to us by local social service agencies. Most of these agencies are listed on our website Partners page. We also prepare and help give out 150 bags of food twice a month at the walkup Plainfield Food Security Project.

Using a referral system helps us better manage our resources. These agencies vet the client to help assure that our limited resources are given to those truly in need. Our team also prepares special food gift cards for 160 families at Easter, Thanksgiving, and at Christmas. This enables the families to buy food that is appropriate to their heritage and beliefs.

Food We Provide To Those In Need—Items & Amounts Vary Based on Family Size

- 1 Package of frozen meat
- 1 Loaf of bread
- 1 lb of Pasta
- 1 Pasta Sauce
- 1 bag rice
- 2 Cans Soup
- 2 Macaroni and Cheese
- 1 Small bag of tea bags
- 1 Jar Peanut Butter
- 1 Jar Jelly
- 1 Can of Fruit or Jar of Applesauce
- 2 Cans Vegetables
- 2 Can of Tuna
- 2 Cans of Beans
- 1/2 Dozen Eggs
- 2 box of cereal (or 4 Instant Breakfast Cereal envelopes for single persons)
- 1 dry or shelf-stable milk
- 1 Paper goods, 1 cleaning product, and 1 personal care item (when available)



You can donate any of these items. Just contact us (info above) for best drop-off days and times. We can even arrange to pick it up!

Too busy to do extra shopping? Donate instead and we'll buy it. Just go to www.starfishplainfield.org and click on the "Donate" button.