



# Help Me Help You

## Food Pantry

### Training Manual

For staff and volunteers

June 2020

# Welcome!

Welcome to Help Me Help You, and thank you for volunteering to be a part of our team!

HMHY has operated food pantry programs since 2006. Current pantries provide clients with a 5-day supply of shelf-stable food items, fresh fruits, vegetables, and frozen items whenever possible.

Our pantry is almost entirely volunteer-run. Clients sign in to self-certify that they meet the income requirements. IDs are not required and proof of income is not required. Clients receive their grocery bag of food on a first come, first served basis. The quantity and selection of food items vary each week and it is based on the items we pick-up.

*Help Me Help You's mission is to uplift homeless and low-income families and individuals by increasing access to food, public benefits, economic security, and affordable housing.*

*Our work reduces hunger and poverty, improves nutrition and health, and boost family economic security. Programs target homeless and disadvantaged families and individuals, including seniors, disabled individuals, single mothers, veterans and youth.*

Current Programs include Food pantries and food distribution services, Public Benefits Enrollment into CalFresh, GR, MediCal, and Social Security Benefits.

## Signing-In and Signing-Out

Tracking volunteer hours is extremely important to our programs.

- 1) It lets us know who to recognize and thank for their service, and
- 2) It helps us obtain measurable data to compete for funding, especially grants.

Please complete and sign the volunteer sign-in sheet upon arrival. Please write your name legibly and sign in and sign out at the beginning **and end** of your shift!

# Volunteers

**Volunteers are key to the pantry's success;** they handle everything from donations to distributions. Put simply: **Without you HMHY's pantry would not be possible.**

## Volunteer Code of Conduct

By volunteering with HMHY, you are becoming an essential part of our programs, our community service efforts, and our organization. You will also undoubtedly be interacting with our clients and our community as a representative of our agency. As such, we ask that you represent us in a manner that is consistent with our values. (See the last page)

Teamwork • Integrity • Passion • Customer Centricity • Empathy • Empowerment

To protect our relationships in the community and our organizational integrity, and to provide the best possible volunteer experience to all of our volunteers, we expect our volunteers to follow rules of conduct that will protect the comfort and safety of all volunteers, employees, and clients:

- Treat all clients and fellow volunteers with courtesy and respect at all times.
- Maintain a positive attitude, an open mind and open heart.
- Keep clients' personal information private.
- Establish and maintain boundaries. It is HMHY's policy that volunteers are not to provide additional resources or services to clients (such as food, money, or transportation) in excess of what is provided by the agency, especially while serving as representatives of HMHY.
- Do not lead or participate in faith-based activities (including prayer or proselytizing) with clients unless expressly invited to do so.
- Follow all posted rules (including those in this handbook), as well as all directions and instructions given by HMHY staff.
- Communicate with our Food Pantry Manager if you are dissatisfied with your experience or wish to discontinue your service with us; we strive to resolve any issues that may negatively affect your volunteer experience, but must be informed to do so.
- When sick, please excuse yourself temporarily from your volunteerism. When possible, please let our Food Pantry Manager know at least 24 hours prior if

you cannot work a shift.

- If you observe conflict between clients and/or volunteers, please report it to the Food Pantry Manager. Do not try to resolve or diffuse the situation yourself.
- Any volunteers receiving any of HMHY's services must follow standard client protocols.
- Adults bringing children under the age of 14 are responsible for supervising their children. If children are disruptive or disrespectful, volunteers may be asked to excuse themselves from service.

## Policies and Practices

Equal Opportunity - It is the policy of HMHY not to discriminate against any volunteer or volunteer applicant because of age, race, color, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin.

Harassment Policy - HMHY prohibits any form of unlawful harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, or veteran status in accordance with applicable laws. With respect to sexual harassment, HMHY strives to foster a work environment free of unlawful sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or retaliation. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome and/or unsolicited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

Any volunteer who believes he/she has been harassed should immediately notify the Food Pantry Manager. All complaints and related information will be investigated and kept confidential to the fullest extent possible.

Drug-Free Environment - HMHY strictly prohibits the use, sale, dispensing, possession, or manufacture of illegal drugs in the workplace or while engaged in HMHY activities.

Smoking - HMHY is a non-smoking facility and a food distributor. Per the United States Health Department smokers must be 25' away from the entrance to the buildings while smoking.

Kitchen/Break Room - The kitchen/break room and all of its facilities are available for use by all volunteers. Please wash any dishes you use and clean up after yourself.

Safety and Accident Rules - HMHY provides a clean, hazard free, healthy, safe environment in accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. As a volunteer you should observe all posted safety rules, adhere to all safety instructions provided by your supervisor and use safety equipment where required. Your workspace should be kept neat, clean and orderly.

Weapons - It is the policy of HMHY that no unauthorized firearms or weapons are permitted on/in company property. This includes but is not limited to, disabling tear gas dispensers (and similar disabling devices), guns, starting pistols, flare pistols, and pocket or hunting knife with a blade exceeding three (3) inches in length, and other objects that are intended for use as a weapon.

First Aid/Emergency Procedures - First Aid Kits are located in the front office. In the event of an accident or injury, notify the Food Pantry Manager immediately. Call 911 for an emergency.

If you are injured, report your injury to the Food Pantry Manager. You may be asked to fill out an accident report.

Parking – Street parking is available. Be sure to observe all parking signs.

# Attendance

When you join our Food Pantry Team at HMHY, you become an essential part of our operations. Our staff is depending on you to serve our clients quickly and compassionately so that together, we can help people become self-sufficient. Our volunteer program is purposefully designed to offer you a meaningful experience, and we trust you to value that experience and honor your commitment to our clients and community.

**The most important thing you can do to help our clients is be here when you say you will be here.**

Without you, the whole system falls apart. Clients can't receive food if there is no one here to help out. When we say our pantry is volunteer- run, we mean it. We're counting on you, and so are our clients; please don't let them down.

**Please arrive 10 minutes before your shift begins** to ensure the person who serves before you will be able to leave on time.

## **Expected Absences or Late Arrivals:**

That being said, we know that schedule conflicts may occur. We understand that things come up, schedules might change, and you may not be able to make every shift every week on time.

If you know you have a schedule conflict for a particular date, e-mail the Food Pantry Manager as soon as possible, preferably at least one week in advance of the absence. We will use this notice to fill your shift and ensure the pantry is fully-staffed.

## **Unexpected Absences or Late Arrivals:**

If you're ill or need to cancel your same-day shift (or will be late), call or text Program Manager, **James Collins at (562) 518-9763**.

Repeated absences will result in you being removed from our primary volunteer list.

# Pantry Rules

Pantry Rules are in place for safety and efficiency, but mostly **safety**; all staff and volunteers are expected to abide by them.

## Rules and Regulations

1. Volunteers must wear ID badges throughout the Food Bank.
2. Volunteers must wash hands in the designated hand washing sink prior to working and additionally as needed.
3. All volunteers must wear close-toed shoes (no sandals or flip flops)
4. Please dress in comfortable clothing, such as jeans, t-shirts and tennis shoes. Keep in mind clothing items may get dirty.
5. No throwing or tossing cans or other products
6. Volunteers are expected to remain in the assigned sorting area
7. No running or playing on pallets
8. No eating or drinking in the warehouse. Water is acceptable to drink inside the warehouse.
9. Always place pallets securely on the ground
10. Do not remove any item, including food, from the Warehouse
11. Do not eat donated products. Remember the food you are sorting has been donated to the Food Bank for distribution to our partner agencies
12. Food cannot be on the floor per health regulations, not even if the food is in a box or another container, there must be a pallet or an additional container between the food and the floor.
13. Food must be stored 6 inches off the floor and 3 inches away from the wall.
14. Food must be stored at suggested holding temperatures.
15. Re-packaging product is NOT ALLOWED.
16. Clean spills or broken glass immediately and *very* thoroughly. Accidents happen; don't be afraid to report them!
17. First Aid/Emergency Procedures First Aid Kits are located in the front office, the warehouse manager's office, and the near the restroom facilities. In the event someone is in need of first aid, direct them to one of the first aid stations. In the event of an accident or injury, notify a staff person immediately. Call 911 for an emergency.
18. If you are injured, report your injury to your supervisor. You may be asked to fill out an accident report.
19. Parking Free parking is available on 16<sup>th</sup> Street and on Daisy. Please do not park in the parking lot.

# Quality and Freshness Dates

Most (but not all) food products are labeled with a specific date that indicates when the product is no longer guaranteed to be at its best. Food manufacturers *choose* to include this date on their products.

- There is no (federal) law *requiring* that packaged food has any quality or
- freshness date at all. There are no (federal) laws regulating:
  - How the date is printed (i.e. 2/9/16, Jan 30, 2017, March 2018, etc.)
  - How it is worded (Best By, Use By, etc.)
  - Where the date is located on the product (top, bottom, side, etc.)

This leads to a lot of confusion. The most important thing to remember is:

**These dates are printed for *quality*, *NOT* *safety*.**

Provided it has been stored properly and is undamaged, **it is perfectly safe to eat “expired” packaged foods**. In fact, most foods don’t experience a decline in product quality until well after these dates, if at all. Quality exceptions include cereal, crackers, and macaroni and cheese, but they remain *safe* to eat.

Date Code	Description of Code
Expiration Date	The date past which a product, such as food or medicine, must be sold or removed from availability because it is no longer expected to be fresh or effective.
Sell by	Tells the store how long to display the product for sale. Retailers rotate stock to be sure they sell the oldest first. The consumer can add days to this before eating it.
Best by	The product is at its highest quality, is freshest and tastiest by this date. The “Best when used by” date is not a purchase or safety date. Most people would notice no difference after the date is passed.
Use by	This is the last date for use of the product at peak quality. This date has been determined by the manufacturer of the product.
Production Date	Tells you when the product was produced. It does not tell you anything about the quality or safety of the product, as it does not tell you anything about shelf life. Production dates are used to track product, they are not meant for the consumer.

# Damaged Products

Because “Best By” dates exist to regulate *quality, not safety*, **damaged products almost always pose a greater health risk than “expired” products**. Although minor dents and dings are common, we must always be careful and inspect every product that enters or exits the pantry for damage.

The following **must** be discarded:

## Cans

- Severe dents in can seams
- Holes or signs of leaking
- Swollen or bulging ends
- Rust that cannot be wiped off



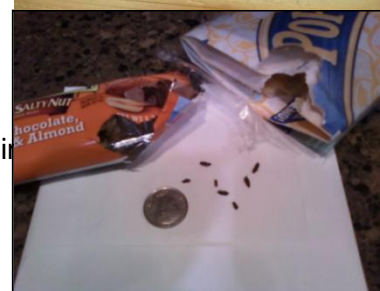
## Jars and Bottles

- Lid is swollen, rusted, or dented. Button on lid is raised.
- Broken jar or signs of leaking
- Unusual appearance or separation of product
- Homemade food



## Boxes and Bags

- Ripped, torn, or cut
- Signs of pests: gnaw marks, droppings, bugs, pin-sized holes in packaging





# Interacting with Clients

Just as most everyone you know is kind, caring, and respectful, almost everyone who utilizes our services shares these qualities. Our clients are no different from your neighbors and friends, and should be treated as such.

Occasionally, however, a client may express dissatisfaction about our services or about the pantry. Clients may not understand why they aren't permitted to select certain sizes or additional items. You may have to decline special requests, or insist that the Distribution Guidelines be strictly followed.

These situations may be uncomfortable, but can usually be resolved with a simple explanation about treating all families equitably or our limited resources that must serve our entire community. Always be professional, courteous, and respectful with clients, but if a client becomes agitated or if you ever feel unsafe, notify the Food Pantry Manager.

While situations like these are rare, it's important to know how you should respond and to be prepared. It's imperative that you understand that all clients *must* receive equal resources, treatment and care, and to understand *why* this is so. You'll be expected to adhere to the Distribution Guidelines and will occasionally have to say "no" to client requests; this will be the most difficult part of your volunteerism, but is essential to ensuring that no one who comes in need of assistance leaves hungry.

## Pantry Reminders and Tips

- **Please Follow the Rules:** The short list of pantry rules is essential to ensuring everyone's safety. They can be found near the beginning of this manual, and posted around the pantry. Please read them carefully and follow them diligently and at all times.
- **Please Follow the System:** HMHY tries very hard to maintain a pantry that operates as a well-oiled machine. Our clients really do depend on it. With so many volunteers coming and going, it's important for everyone to be on the same page, or we'll end up running in circles and correcting each other's work. Take some time to learn how the pantry operates, and feel free to share ideas about how things might work better – the people who do the work are in the best position to identify ways it can be done faster, easier, or more simply. We value your input!
- **Please Be Patient and Detail-Oriented:** Please take your time, be thorough, and ensure the good quality of your work. Simply getting things done is not as important as doing them well, and we want you to take pride in your work at the end of the day. HMHY is depending on you to help us provide quality service that is fair and equitable. Someone in this community will receive assistance because of your efforts, and the quality of your work will directly affect their quality of care.

- **Remember to Sign-In and Out for your Shifts:** Not only does this help us track your hours individually, but it helps us track all volunteer hours over time, which can help secure grants and other funds for our programming.
- **This Training Manual is Your Friend:** This training manual will help you to remember key elements of your pantry training, and can help answer your questions if you forget things or start to feel lost. Copies of this handbook can always be found at the Volunteer Station. If you have a question, the first place to search for an answer is this handbook!
- **Pantry Signage is Also Your Friend:** Be sure to read the signage around the pantry, which may also answer your questions. **Keep watch for special assignments and notes from the Food Pantry Manager, as well.**
- **Fellow Volunteers and HMHY Staff are Also Your Friends:** If ever you feel lost or confused and can't find an answer from the manual or the signage, please don't hesitate to seek help from fellow volunteers, HMHY staff or the Food Pantry Manager. We're glad you're here and are happy to help! If we can't help in the moment, we'll offer you your best available option at that point, which is...
- **When All Else Fails, It's Better to Leave It Than to "Guess":** It's possible you'll have questions that will be hard to answer, even for staff or other volunteers. That's ok! If there's not a clear answer about where something goes or what something means, **don't guess!** Move on from a task, if needed, let the Food Pantry Manager aware and/ or leave a note for our staff so we'll know what the issue was. Knowing where the gaps are will help improve our training for you and for future volunteers! "Guessing" creates more work for someone else later and sweeps the problem under the rug.

## Good Samaritan Act

On October 1, 1996, President Bill Clinton signed the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act to encourage the donation of food and grocery products to non-profit organizations for distribution to needy individuals. This Act protects individuals from civil and criminal liability should a product donated in good faith later cause harm to the recipient. It is the policy of the Second Harvest of North Central Ohio to comply with the Good Samaritan Act. Compliance with the Act is a shared responsibility of each Second Harvest employee and volunteer.

To insure compliance with the Act you must immediately notify the Volunteer Relations Coordinator or Repack Assistant if you observe any of the following situations:

- Food that does not appear to be wholesome or fit for consumption because of age, freshness, contamination, or insect infestation.
- Containers that have been opened or appear to have been tampered with.
- Canned goods that are leaking, swollen, severely dented, or no longer airtight.

Your assistance with ensuring that all food items are wholesome and fit for consumption is essential to the operations.

# How To Wash Your Hands



## **Wet your hands and arms**

Use running water as hot as you can comfortably stand



## **Apply soap**

Apply enough to build up a good lather



## **Scrub your hands and arms vigorously for 10 to 15 seconds**

Clean under fingernails and between fingers



## **Rinse your hands and arms thoroughly**

Use running warm water



## **Dry your hands and arms**

Use a single-use paper towel or hand dryer



# FOOD ALLERGY AWARENESS!

## WHAT TO KNOW!

A food allergy is an abnormal response to a food triggered by the body's immune system. Once exposed to the allergen, the allergic individual can suffer a mild to life-threatening reaction. The only control is avoidance of the food. Despite taking precautions, allergic people may be unknowingly exposed to an allergen.

Approximately 11 million Americans suffer from true food allergies. Be prepared to protect your customers. Know the eight major food allergens and the symptoms of an allergic reaction.

## THE EIGHT MAJOR FOOD ALLERGENS

MILK



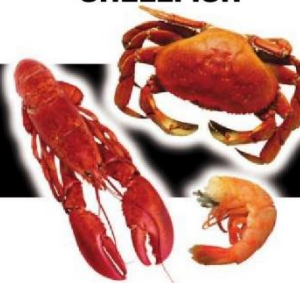
EGG



FISH



CRUSTACEAN SHELLFISH



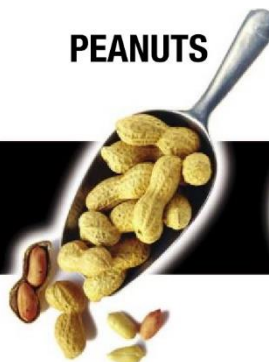
WHEAT



SOYBEANS



PEANUTS



TREE NUTS



### SYMPTOMS OF ALLERGIC REACTION

LOSS OF CONSCIOUSNESS • SHORTNESS OF BREATH • ITCHING OR TINGLING IN AND AROUND MOUTH, FACE, SCALP, HANDS AND FEET  
HIVES(WELTS) • WHEEZING AND DIFFICULTY BREATHING • SWELLING OF THE FACE, EYELIDS, TONGUE, LIPS, HANDS OR FEET  
TIGHTENING OF THE THROAT (DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING) • SUDDEN ONSET OF VOMITING, CRAMPS OR DIARRHEA

## WHAT TO DO!

# REACT QUICKLY - CALL 911

## Notify Management - It Could Save A Life!

An Allergic Reaction Can Take Only Minutes To Develop. Don't Hesitate!





# Discard Cans With These Defects



Severe dent in seam



Deep dents in can body



Missing or unreadable labels



Swollen or bulging ends



Holes or signs of leaking



Rust that cannot be wiped off



## Apples

### Receiving and inspecting

Apples should be firm and have smooth skin.

### Storing and handling

Apples should be stored at 32-34°F, at 85-95% relative humidity. Susceptible to freezing; do not store below 29°F.

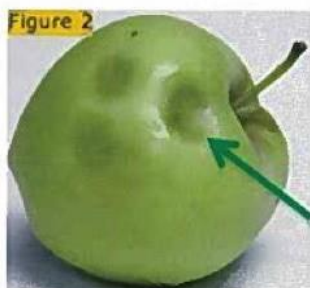
Sensitive to ethylene: No

Produces ethylene: Yes

Odor-sensitive: Yes

Odor-producing: No

### Acceptable

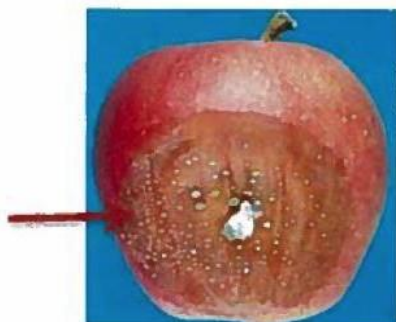


Bruises

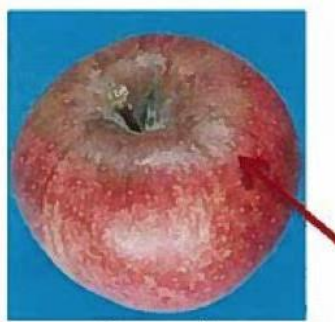


Superficial spot

### Not acceptable



Blue mold



Gray mold



Alternaria rot



Bull's eye rot

# COVID 19 Safety Protocol

The protection of staff and volunteers is of primary concern. In light of the current Pandemic the following rules have been implemented.

- Employees, Volunteers, and Staff members are required to have their temperature taken upon entry into the building.
- If you have a fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, recent loss of taste or smell, headaches, muscle pain, or sore throat, please stay home. If you exhibit or feel the onset of any of these symptoms, please let the Manager know and excuse yourself immediately. **It is required that you report if you are experiencing any of these symptoms.**
- All Employees and Staff members must wear masks at all times.
- Social distancing must be practiced at all times. All volunteers and staff members are required to remain 6 feet away from one another, clients and others at all times.
- Practice good hygiene by frequently washing your hands and using the hand sanitizers which has been placed throughout the facility and pantry service area.
- If you have any questions or concerns, talk to the Food Pantry Manager.

# Please visit and interact with us on Social Media!

- Facebook: [www.facebook.com/HelpLB](http://www.facebook.com/HelpLB)
- Instagram: [www.instagram.com/helpmehelpyou\\_LB](http://www.instagram.com/helpmehelpyou_LB)
- Twitter: [www.twitter.com/helpmehelpuLB](http://www.twitter.com/helpmehelpuLB)

## Release and acknowledgement

We are always taking photos and videos to promote pantry services. **Please note:** Your acceptance as a volunteer authorizes Help Me Help You to:

1. Record your likeness and/or voice on a video, audio, photographic, digital, electronic or any other medium;
2. Use your name and biographical material in connection with such recordings;
3. Use, reproduce, exhibit, and/or distribute your name, biographical material, and such recording in any medium for a variety of promotional, advertising, educational, and/or other lawful purposes.
4. You further agree to release Help Me Help You, its staff members, and board from all liability related to the recordings and waive any claims or rights of compensation or ownership regarding such uses, and agree and understand that all such recordings shall remain the property of Help Me Help You.

If you have objections to any of these, please contact the Food Pantry Manager.

**Feel free to contact the office if you have additional questions or concerns at (562) 612-5001, or [info@helpmehelpu.org](mailto:info@helpmehelpu.org)**





# CORE VALUES



## EMPATHY

- Understanding and respecting each and every client, co-worker, community member and partner



## EMPOWERMENT

- Providing tools to achieve long term economic stability



## TEAMWORK

- Collaborating for a common purpose because together we make a difference



## INTEGRITY

- Striving to be honest and true in all we say and do



## CUSTOMER CENTRICITY

- Providing quality service and going the extra mile for clients



## PASSION

- Driven to serve others