

If you have any comments or suggestions regarding this newsletter, please send to the above address or email director@friedenspantry.org.

www.friedenspantry.org



How can you help?

We have a variety of volunteer opportunities for you and your family like by pre-bagging food, unloading deliveries, and rescuing produce from local grocery stores. Consider hosting a food and supply drive (ask us what is needed) and follow us on Facebook (@friedenspantry) to receive updates. Email us at volunteer@friedenspantry.org to sign up.

Donate.

Consider helping us with our "purchasing power" by making a donation through our website or mailing a check. www.FriedensPantry.org/donate

Pantry Locations:

(HQ and Mailing)

Coggs Center
1220 W. Vliet St.
Milwaukee, WI 53205

Hope House
209 W. Orchard St.
Milwaukee, WI 53204

Zion Rock
10230 W. Fond Du Lac Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53224

Despensa de la Paz
1615 S. 22nd St.
Milwaukee, WI 53204



NOURISHING NEWS

Fall/Winter 2020

It is with a grateful heart to serve Friedens Community Ministries in a leadership position as a board member and as the chairman of the board for the past several years. We have grown as an organization from two pantries to four pantries with service to all parts of the city. There are **hundreds of volunteers** who donate **thousands of hours** led by a team of dedicated core staff who give their best every day. **We know that we will not end hunger in our lifetime, but we also know those we serve will receive our very best with dignity and respect.** Dignity, respect, kindness, and compassion make this organization different.

The needs of the community we serve are great, but when we serve together, it just seems to work. Even during the current pandemic, when choice is limited, there is still dignity. People wear masks to protect one another and kindness abounds. No pushing, no arguing – just a willingness to say, “why don’t you go ahead of me” or providing space to not crowd anyone who comes to the pantry. **There is a resolve to making sure that everyone gets enough. There is always enough if we share.** That is what makes this place different.

There will be challenges in the future, but there will also be joy and celebrating. Our long-term lease at the Despensa pantry will ensure that we can grow with the community; to serve the food needs and to expand as opportunities arise. Our partnership with StreetLife Communities—where we share the space, the cost of the space, and even some staff—demonstrates that we can move further by collaborating than competing. We are grateful for our sponsors and for the food banks that provide food and support.

As I look back and reflect upon my time with the organization, I am happy to be part of building and continuing the legacy that began 40 years ago. We long for the day when we are no longer needed, when people have enough, and we can close our doors once and for all. **Until then, we will continue to do what we do best: serve the people who come to us, who in return give so much back.** Without that exchange, our work would just be another transaction for food. **But with mutuality, we serve one another with love.** After all, love is what makes this organization different.

Onward,

David Nelson, PhD, MS
Friedens Board Chair
Medical College of Wisconsin



Sophia Torrijos
Executive Director



Mansa Yusef
Operations Manager



Cheryl Ousley
Site Manager



Nina Gaulin
Food Center Coordinator



Sean McGibany
Volunteer Manager



Katrina Ramsey
Volunteer Manager

Communities are Built on Fresh

At Friedens, we've been building community through food for over 40 years. We've laughed and cried and celebrated with you on our journey for true nourishment. **We've come to know food not just as a means of survival, but as the glue that binds us together.** With good meals and great friends, we can thrive. We know that the quality of produce a person receives is the difference between **being fed** and **being fulfilled**, between simply full and entirely satisfied. We asked our community members last year what mattered to them, and we heard them loud and clear: "more fresh, please!"

We also know that our families struggle with more than access to food; sometimes food that is healthy can also be unfamiliar. How many of us have tried cooking with new ingredients, only to throw up our hands in confusion and reach for the frozen pizza instead? Trying something new can be overwhelming, which is why we all benefit from safe spaces to learn about healthy habits. **To be served a dependable supply of food in a space that makes us feel valued, opens our minds to new experiences, and heals us from the inside out means this: peace.** This is what Friedens is all about.



We are making great strides at improving the look and feel of our Despensa pantry, as well as working hard to increase the community's access to healthy produce and supportive wellness.

Coming soon:

- An updated kitchenette
- A new classroom for volunteers and partner organizations to offer better resources around food and wellness
- A new garden space to gather and grow together

Total Raised for Improvements: \$110,000



"A place of peace and a place of hope in all the seasons."

The Morning Crew



Our Morning Crew, from left to right: Brian, Lonnie, and Jimmy.

Our Despensa de la Paz pantry would be nothing without our morning crew. Calling themselves "The Three Musketeers," Lonnie, Jimmy, and Brian are at the very core of the Friedens family. **Arriving before the sun is even up, this team makes possible so much of what we do every day.** From facilitating our deliveries to making sure the pantry runs smoothly, our morning crew is an essential foundation for all of our efforts at Friedens. **When asked about the best part of working together, all three provide the same answer: "Everything."**

Jimmy, who's worked at Despensa for over seven years, has devoted himself to the pantry for the very reason Friedens exists: connection. **It's the people, the companionship, and the joy of our volunteer team that keeps him coming back.** With the city almost eight months into the pandemic, a lot has changed, but not the community: **"Even with things the way they are, people are still in good spirits."** Every Friday morning, you can walk into the packing room and hear the Rolling Stones blasting from the stereo. That's Jimmy — motivating volunteers to work hard and keep smiling in the process.

Lonnie, a neighbor of Jimmy's, found his way to Friedens as many on our team have: through a friend. As a volunteer for three years, Lonnie has become a strong part of the Friedens community. **One of his favorite things about the pantry is the openness with which others are greeted: "We accept every donation and every person who comes to us."** Over the last eight months, a lot has changed at the pantry. And although we've faced many challenges as a team in the wake of the pandemic, Lonnie sums up our attitude: "We just gotta do it." As for Brian, it's camaraderie that drew him to Friedens. His time with us started as a simple offer to help carry a delivery into the pantry. **That small act of kindness has evolved into over seven years of service.** Even though our operations have changed and some jobs are now done differently, the root of Brian's commitment remains the same: **"I love the people I work with."**

If you would like to nominate an outstanding volunteer, contact us at volunteer@friedenspantry.org.

COVID Innovations

Back in March, Friedens had to quickly readjust the way we serve the community in order to accommodate new guidelines brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Several measures have been taken to keep our staff, volunteers and community members healthy and safe. In what could be considered a time of panic and uncertainty, **we — with the help of many individuals — have implemented new innovative techniques to provide the best service possible:**

- Brand **new iPads** for our intake workers that allow us to serve at a safe distance
- **Drive up service** with pre-packed groceries, which has reduced wait times
- **Flex Farms** for growing fresh produce indoors every month that will be distributed to families
- A **new intake database** allowing for a faster and safer check-in experience

Our community appreciates having access to an essential service in a safe way that also continues the relationship we've built together over the years.



Individuals served so far in 2020: **27,000+**