

# **Volunteer Handbook**

## **Victor-Farmington Food Cupboard**

**1246 Commercial Drive Bldg. B**

**Farmington, NY 14425**

**Website: [VFFoodcupboard.org](http://VFFoodcupboard.org)**

**Facebook: [Victor/Farmington Food Cupboard](https://www.facebook.com/Victor-Farmington-Food-Cupboard)**



**FEED THE  
HUNGRY**

## **OUR MISSION**

The Victor-Farmington Food Cupboard focuses on feeding families and individuals who are food insecure. We strive to serve everyone we encounter with dignity and respect and try to create a sense of empowerment so that our clients are able to achieve self-sufficiency.

We rely on community volunteers, county-wide financial support, and welcome partnerships and collaborations. Please share your ideas!

Thank you so much for taking an interest in our mission. Together we can reduce hunger in our region.

## **HISTORY**

The Victor-Farmington Food cupboard was started in 1993 as a joint mission between First Presbyterian and St. Patrick's churches in Victor. Originally offered space in the in the house located in front of the cemetery on High Street, the food cupboard expanded and incorporated help from four other area churches until it could no longer fit in that space.

After many years of functioning as an ecumenical food cupboard, we sought official not-for-profit status last year. These churches and several other area businesses and fund raisers still support us through their mission committees, but we are not governed by any of them. The V-F Food Cupboard, Inc. became an independent and registered 501(c) (3) **not-for-profit corporation** on September 11, 2013. The V-F Food Cupboard serves residents of **Ontario County** who can provide proof of residency. The food cupboard is governed by the Executive Board and managed by the Board of Operations no one receives any compensation for services.

The Executive Board of Directors manages the corporation and all of its business and affairs: Dawn Rockefeller, President; Carol S. Maue, Esq., Legal Counsel; Brian Lindsay, Vice-President; Beth Thomas, Secretary; Patti O'Connor and John Resch, Co-Treasurers; Directors-at-Large: Mark Hamilton, Scott Sprague, Scott Cunliffe, Tom Palomaki. The Operations Board of Directors manages the day-to-day business operations of the food cupboard and the volunteers: Public Relations Director, Karen Guidarelli; Volunteer Coordinators, Helen and Bob Senn; Building and Facilities Manager and Purchasing Agent, Don Benwitz; Church Liaison, Dianne Taillon; Office Manager, Karen Schantz; Pantryworr Coordinator, Kirsten Benwitz; Social Media director, Rachel Hucko; Marketing and Website Director, Anna Harmer. Joint meetings are held during the first Monday of the month with the Operations Board meeting at 6:30 and the Executive board meeting at 7:00. All meetings are held in the conference room of the Victor First Presbyterian Church unless changed in writing. Guests are welcome.

The Victor-Farmington Food Cupboard, Inc. is a **client choice pantry**, which means that clients get to make their own choices from the food we have to offer. This model was chosen to preserve the dignity of our clients and give them some control in choosing food they will actually use. This has proven to be very effective and actually saves us money by us not over-spending on less popular items. National and LOCAL statistics currently prove that 1 in 8 people are food insecure; they do not know where their next meal will come from. Clients who live anywhere in Ontario County may visit once per month. Our policy is to serve everyone, no matter where he or she lives, on the first

visit. We do not ask for proof of need. If the person is hungry enough to step through our door, we are happy to serve the nutritious food we have to offer. We are **100% volunteer and donation funded**. We spend about \$10,000 per month to feed close to 600 families per month. This money is spent buying food at greatly reduced prices from Foodlink in Rochester and in the summer from local farmers. Foodlink is a regional food hub and the Feeding America Food Bank serving Allegany, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates counties' food pantries. We apply for grants and follow Foodlink's guidelines to ensure food safety and civil rights compliance and use their experience to continually improve our food cupboard.

The Victor-Farmington Food Cupboard, Inc. also sponsors the **Victor Central School Backpack Program** which was started in 2009 by the high school Leadership classes to address the school nurses' concerns that some students were coming to school on Mondays complaining of headaches and stomach pains due to hunger. After collaborating with the Victor-Farmington Food Cupboard, researching the national "Backpack Program," and presenting to the VCS Board of Education, the students decided to make a deliver system open to any VCS family who needs extra food for their children during long weekends and school holidays. Parents call in and leave just the number of children and their address on a recorder at the school. The VCS students and the Victor-Farmington Food Cupboard, Inc. donate healthy, easy-to-prepare snacks and the students pack it assembly line-style in a classroom at VCS and then deliver a bag to be hung anonymously on recipients' door knobs. No face-to-face contact eliminates the stigma of receiving food help and our research has revealed that the Backpack program is reaching families who will not seek help at the food cupboard due to the perceived stigma. Peanut butter, fruit, granola bars, and juice boxes would be gratefully accepted at the VCS High School Office or at the food cupboard labelled for Backpack. 115 houses and over 200 students were served in March of 2018 and the program has expanded to include donations from Panera Bread Company.

### **FOOD CUPBOARD HOURS OF OPERATION**

Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings from 9:30-11:30

Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings from 5:30-7:30

**Volunteers should arrive at least 30 minutes before a shift.** Monday volunteers should split: some early arrival of 45 minutes for processing weekend donations and restocking shelves and some staying 45 minutes after the shift to finish processing the Foodlink delivery.

We ask that clients not arrive more than 30 minutes before we open. We are always busiest at the beginning of shifts, so clients should consider coming later in the shift when parking is available closer to the door. Inevitably there are clients arriving and waiting up to two hours before a shift. PLEASE do not open early to avoid setting a dangerous precedent.

### **PROOF OF RESIDENCY**

We require proof of Ontario County residency for every adult in the household. Acceptable forms of proof: current NYS Driver's license, official mail received at the clients' residence such as a current utility bill. We also need to see proof of dependency and proof of address for all the children in the household: birth certificate, guardianship papers, school records, doctor's forms. Clients will only have to provide this proof on the first (or second visit). If the client still has not provided proof on the third visit the volunteer should make a strong note and tell the client that they will not be

allowed to shop next time without the paperwork. In extreme cases after repeated instances of forgetfulness, the client would be given a one day's supply of food that the volunteer's create and told to come back during the next shift to present the proof.

### **VOLUNTEERING**

1) Fill out a volunteer application and submit it in person to the Victor-Farmington Food Cupboard office at 1246 Commercial Drive or mail it to the Victor-Farmington Food Cupboard P.O. Box 154 Victor, NY 14564

2) Sign the Volunteer Confidentiality Statement

3) Read the Volunteer Handbook and take the electronic courses or attend a training session.

3) Sign the Handbook Received Form and sign up for a shift. You will be mentored by the other experienced volunteers who have always been gracious and generous teachers.

### **BASIC SHIFT OPENING PROCEDURES**

- Arrive for your shift 30 minutes before opening the door to clients. (earlier Monday mornings)
- Take thermometer readings from each freezer and record temperatures on log sheet clipped to the front of each freezer. If the thermometer is missing or broken please contact Brian Lindsay 585-278-7823 or Don Benwitz by putting a note in his pouch in the lower left drawer of the desk.
- Check donation bin and weigh any donated food, record weights in orange binder.
- Fill shelves with extra stock as needed.
- Shift bread to next higher shelf and adjust "Best by" labels. NEWEST bread goes on the bottom shelf.
- Make a new meat list by examining freezer contents
- Fill shopping carts with bags
- Put out the sign and open the doors at exactly shift opening time.
- Smile and remember how important your donated hours are to reducing hunger in our county and accept our sincere THANKS for a job well done

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Both the services offered at the Victor-Farmington Food Cupboard and the Victor Central School Snackpack Program stress the importance of confidentiality to guarantee that all of our clients are treated with dignity and respect. The VCS students helping with Snackpacks, swear an oath of confidentiality EVERY time they pack and deliver food to the 150 students who are currently receiving healthy snacks every long weekend and school holiday. Volunteers at the food cupboard should consider their service bound by the same ideal; every time we walk in the food cupboard we should remember to censor any thought, comment, or social media post that might jeopardize the identity of a client, even if no names are posted. If you are reading this, your reward is obviously an intrinsic one and you should be proud of yourself.

- ❖ Please keep all sensitive food cupboard topics private.
- ❖ All volunteers will be required to sign and return a Volunteer Confidentiality Statement.

## **CLIENT REGISTRATION PROCESS**

Clients arrive and are immediately greeted by a happy, friendly volunteer who distributes a laminated number card to prove arrival order. The volunteer should ask if the client is new to the V-F Food Cupboard and if so, the volunteer should lead the client through the rest of the process for the day. Clients are then directed to the waiting area before checking-in or registering in the private office. If the new client is an Ontario County resident, the volunteer at the desk asks them for proof of residency and has them dictate details for computer entry on the first visit which details their name, address, and number of dependents (New client registration form for the head of household, 1 household info sheet for EACH household member). Each subsequent visit is documented on a dated calendar within the computer program. If the client is NOT from Ontario County we would still all the family to shop on **this day only** and refer them to Foodlink for a food cupboard near their home.

If the client is returning, the desk clerk would ask, "Is everything still current? (address, phone, household)

Before the client leaves the office, the Desk Volunteer looks for special notes in the client file, allows the client to take paper products, toiletries, and a birthday pack (if a family member has a birthday that month). Look for signs posted in the office for quantities allowed that day.

Special needs are often detected by the Desk Volunteer who notifies another volunteer on the shift of additional needs (ie: food allergies, limited cooking ability, family of 12, additional needs). There are posters hanging in the waiting room that offer additional services for clients and the Ontario County Directory of Services will be on the desk. Desk Volunteers may write down phone numbers for clients, but please do not offer advice.

The client is then issued a laminated shopping guide card based on the number of people in the household which delineates how many **vegetables, fruits, combination foods, proteins, dairy, fats and oils, sweets, and grains** the client can take from each area. (All volunteers must be trained on Pantryworx by the Director and will intern with an experienced reception desk volunteer before being given a password and being able to run the desk alone).

**VOLUNTEER SKILLS NEEDED:** empathy, ability to deal with clients who are stressed (sometimes even tearful), organizational skills, interviewing strategies, paperwork management, multi-tasking, conflict resolution skills in dealing with impatient or argumentative clients, leadership skills in communicating client needs and protocol practices to other volunteers, problem-solving skills for special situations, and a friendly, welcoming smile and greeting for everyone.

## **CLIENT SHOPPING**

The client takes a shopping cart that has been stocked with shopping bags and proceeds to the shopping area, starting with vegetables and fruits and continuing clockwise around the food cupboard ending with bread (so it doesn't get flattened!). First-time volunteers are assisted by a volunteer who will help them discern the number of items they can take from each section based on the shopping card and any posted signs (ie: 1 combination food per household member, Peanut Butter counts as 2 protein choices). Volunteers should continue to monitor and assist **ALL** clients with choices and policies. Enforce rules without being overly confrontational- A Fine Line.

**VOLUNTEER SKILLS NEEDED:** welcoming smile and manner, patience, assist with cart and bags as needed, offer sign explanations, explain choices or identify foods, offer cooking or recipe advice as appropriate (without being too obtrusive), help occupy small children, open bags for people and hold them while clients fill the bags, assist with top and bottom shelf items if needed.

### **FROZEN MEAT DISTRIBUTION**

Clients shopping for frozen meat located in the 8 refrigerator/freezers that we have at the back of the food cupboard often takes the most time because they have at least three choices from the protein shelf and at least two choices from the freezers (sometimes as many as four based on the current stock). The clients must choose from a list of the fish, beef, pork, chicken, turkey, duck, and lamb choices we have that day and a volunteer retrieves the item from the freezer and delivers it to the client at the corner of the shelves. Clients are not allowed to serve themselves in the freezer area, nor are they allowed in the dry storage area behind the shelves near the back door.

**VOLUNTEER SKILLS NEEDED:** a smile and a friendly greeting, ask how many people are in the household, sometimes requires heavy lifting, gloves to prevent frozen hands, many trips back and forth to the freezers, patience as they choose from many options, non-judgmental attitude for picky people, skill in discerning the size of a meat choice as it relates to a family size. (ie: a family of two may have a whole chicken but not a 10 lb. ham) Recipe ideas for meat dishes are often welcomed. Share your cooking ideas and good recipes using the basic ingredients we offer, assist clients in bagging the meat and direct them to dairy section (cheese may sometimes be available in the refrigerator ).

### **SWEETS & BREAD ROTATION**

The sweets and grains sections have posted signs for quantities (ie: 2 cupcakes equals one choice) and the bread shelves are organized by the Best By Date (freshest bread is on the BOTTOM shelf and each shelf higher is usually one day older). Once bread reaches the top shelf by rotation each day, the next day's rotation would have any older bread on the top shelf or sweets more than 5 days past "best by" moved to the center of the aisle. These choices are FREE of point restrictions and clients are encouraged to take as much as they can use.

### **LOADING**

Please collect the shopping cards at the door or direct the clients to put the card in the pocket by the spaghetti shelf.

Clients must then transport the bags from the front door to their car without taking the shopping cart into the parking lot. If there are enough volunteers we try to assist clients to their vehicles to speed the process and eliminate congestion at the front door. Extra bags are located in strategic places around the food cupboard for double bagging. Volunteers can restock the shopping carts with bags and offer it to the next shopper.

**VOLUNTEER SKILLS NEEDED:** tact in dealing with the inevitable question of "Can't I just wheel this to my car?" Response, "No, I'm sorry but I'll help you take the bags to your car. Which one is it?"

### **PICK-UP ROUTES**

Donations from Tops and Wegmans bakeries are picked up by volunteers in their own personal vehicles every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturdays. NEW identification lanyards are now available for anyone who drives one of these routes. You will have a laminated card on a lanyard assigned to you to wear on pickup days for the duration of your volunteer service. Upon arrival at the store, check with the service desk for the current procedure and show your identification. If signature is required we ask you to sign your name and lanyard number.

These donations are usually weighed in advance by the stores. Ask for the weight amount, record it, and make sure to have the volunteers record the weight in the binder when you deliver the baked goods to the food cupboard. If you have time, help shelve the goods and wait for the boxes or return for the boxes for the next pick up.

**VOLUNTEER SKILLS NEEDED:** Sign and return a Victor-Farmington Food Cupboard, Inc. Driver Policy form, reliable transportation with enough storage capacity to hold up to eight banana boxes of bread, ability to lift up to 25-30 pounds, time to pick up, ability to walk fairly long distances carrying weight, interpersonal skills in dealing with store personnel, dependability. Time commitment approx. 1 hr.

### **PROCESSING DELIVERIES**

Foodlink deliveries from Target, Walmart, and B.J's every Monday and Thursday mornings. Our purchased food from the Foodlink warehouse arrives every other Tuesday morning.

Monday and Thursday deliveries come to the back door on large wooden pallets that are shrink wrapped. 1-6 pallets may be delivered and may contain thousands of pounds of boxed food which is USUALLY boxed no heavier than fifty pounds per box. The boxes must be carried in the back door, weighed, and recorded on a Foodlink Agency Retail Store Pickup Form (large white binder). The Foodlink driver will tell the volunteers which pallets are from which store and the boxes are usually labelled as well.

The food is divided by box into Dairy, Dough (all sweets and bread), Produce (fresh fruits & vegetables), Freezer (anything other than dough that comes frozen (pizza, fish, meat, combination foods like lasagna), Grocery (canned, boxed, bagged items), Non-food (dog food, laundry soap). Totals for each category from each store are totaled on the form and placed in the back of the large, white, three- ring binder located behind the dairy and sweets shelving section. The volunteer who records the weights should sign and date the forms.

**VOLUNTEER SKILLS NEEDED:** Muscles! This can be a big job and often requires manipulating food among the freezers to fit as well as weighing, best by date checking, and shelving grocery and baked goods. Think of it as a really GREAT excuse to skip the gym that day!

### **DONATIONS**

**Donation Bin:** Any donations that are dropped off in the brown trunk storage bin by the back door should be weighed and recorded in the small, orange binder that contains a form to record the donor's name, an anonymous donation, or a donation from a local church or organization. Please initial and date the donation received.

**Donations Made In Person:** Food drive donations or food from collection boxes may be delivered to the food cupboard during normal operating hours. This food is processed in the Orange binder and

the donor should be asked if he or she requires a receipt. The green receipts are located in the bottom drawer of the desk and any volunteer can sign the receipt. List the WEIGHT of the food on the form and date it.

Monetary Donations: Occasionally people drop off checks or cash to the food cupboard during open hours. Volunteers can accept these donations in the lock box located on the west wall of the office. Treasurer, Linda Flood will send tax deductible receipts in addition to the green receipt the volunteer gives to the donor. Please label cash with donor's name and address. If you have any questions you can contact Linda at 585-624-2686. **All donations to the Victor-Farmington Food Cupboard, Inc. are tax deductible.**

Electronic Donations: Anyone can donate funds through our website at **WWW.VFFOOD.ORG** and use the PayPal button located at the bottom of the website. **Paypal** can accept one-time donations for any amount or a recurring payment. Our **Neighbors Feeding Neighbors campaign** outlines the details of using paypal to support a family of four for a month for \$20 or a Snackpack student for \$5 a month.

### **STOCKING SHELVES**

- All ingredients **MUST** be listed on everything we distribute to protect those with food allergies.
- A date **MUST** be listed on products: "best by/use by" "expiration" date. This does not mean that food has to be thrown out by that date. In general most canned or boxed foods are good for a year beyond the "best by date." Consult the Food Share charts for specific product guidelines or download the Food Keeper App for your smart phone.
- Test food for weight, color, consistency, and other features that might suggest food has gone bad.
- Loose items without ingredient labelling should be discarded.

#### Boxes and Jars

- Broken packaging can be taped if internal packaging is not broken and if ingredient label is present. (shake test: if it leaks, discard it)
- Donated Jars: unscrew caps if there is not a pressure seal. ie: peanut butter should have intact foil seal
- Jars with a pressure seal should still have the center safety button depressed, showing that the seal is intact. Test the seal by pushing it. It should not move. If the seal is not intact, discard it.

Cans: must have ingredient label and "best by" date

- If a can has rust on it, discard it.
- Cans without labels are discarded.
- Watch for dented cans: Sharp edges on a dent-discard; dent on rim-discard, dent on seam-discard.
- Bloated cans are discarded.
- When in doubt, throw it out!
- We cannot accept canned homemade foods

### **End of Shift Procedures:**

- Stock shelves (rotate older stock to front) Shelves should be full.
- Save banana boxes in storage unit (key by back door)
- Break down all other boxes and take to the dumpster. (key by back door)
- Make sure no food is stored on the floor
- Bring Food Cupboard sign back inside at end of shift time. Store near front door.
- Make sure no food is stored with cleaning products
- Vacuum rugs
- Take out the garbage
- Pull down all the shades
- Check to make sure freezer doors are closed
- Turn heat to low setting

### **Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities**

Volunteers have the right to:

- A respectful, safe, organized, and friendly work environment. We appreciate what you are doing and we want to thank you for your time and effort.
- A clear description of the volunteer project you have chosen.
- Knowledge about the programs and services Victor-Farmington Food Cupboard, Inc. provides
- Projects that can, as best as we can manage, match volunteers' skills and interests.
- Access to any and all information to help them carry out their assignments.
- Appreciation and recognition from Victor-Farmington Food Cupboard, Inc.

Volunteers are Responsible for:

- Maintaining Confidentiality of All Clients
- Complying with all Civil Rights Laws (Reviewed Yearly)
  - Allow a client to file a complaint
  - Identify and accommodate language needs
  - Accommodate persons with disabilities
  - Explain why we must collect data
- Maintaining Professional Boundaries (Reviewed Yearly)

Wearing proper clothing

- Wear closed-toe shoes. Volunteers risk injury by wearing flip-flops, sandals, or open-toed shoes of any kind.
- Dress appropriately for a group activity.
- Food Cupboard volunteers may get dirty. Dress with this in mind.
- No low-cut tops or tops with offensive language, please. Dress appropriately for a public service position.

Acting Appropriately

- No climbing on shelving or equipment. Please use the step stool for reaching high items.

- No smoking in the food cupboard or on Victor-Farmington Food Cupboard grounds.
- Be mindful of others and watch your language and behavior.
- Anything that distracts volunteers from hearing instructions and places them in undue risk of injury is strictly prohibited. Leave IPods, radios, MP3 players, and earbuds at home.
- Be extremely sensitive to clients listening to your conversations with other volunteers. Remember that your circumstances may be very different from the clients we serve and we would not want to unintentionally alienate or hurt clients' feelings.

If you have any questions or concerns you may contact any of the board members listed.

THANK YOU so much for your generous donation of your time and talents.

### **QUICK REFERENCE LIST ---Policies and Procedures**

\*Most important policy: anyone, from anywhere, who is in emergency food need is served by the Victor/Farmington Food Cupboard at any time. Additionally, families and individuals do not need to show identification or verify their home address the first time they come to the Victor/Farmington Food Cupboard.

\*Homeless individuals do not need to verify an address and can visit the Food Cupboard more than once per month if needed. Please contact the Food Cupboard director/president or vice-president when these issues arise and get permission to put a note in their file.

\*Policies and procedures can be updated and changed by the Executive Board of the Food Cupboard with a quorum vote. Changes to policies and procedures will be posted on the FoodCupboard office bulletin board and will be e-mailed out to those on our e-mail list.

\*The Food Cupboard president or vice president need to give advance permission for a food delivery off Food Cupboard grounds. When this permission is given, at least two volunteers will drop off the food and the president and vice president will have the details of the delivery in advance of the delivery.

\*Children under 16 years of age must volunteer with a parent or adult guardian.

\*No more than 2 children under 16 can volunteer during one regular shift.

\*Client confidentiality is of paramount concern, please do not discuss clients outside the Food Cupboard. Please do not talk about the Victor Farmington Food Cupboard or clients on Facebook or through other social media outlets unless it is to share details about an event.

\*If a situation with or between clients becomes unsafe please do not hesitate to contact 911 for support.

\*VF Food Cupboard badges should be worn by volunteers picking up food donations.

\*Only board members will be posting limit signs for food choices and these will be standardized so that there is more visual continuity.

Procedures:

\*Volunteers should arrive 30 minutes before the shift is scheduled to begin. Monday morning volunteers should arrive a bit earlier as there may be additional shelf stocking to be done from weekend donations or the Monday retail delivery.

- \*Please check temperatures in all freezers and refrigerators and log these at the beginning of each shift.
- \*Make sure the meat list is updated at the beginning of each shift. Meat choice limits will be posted on Mondays and Thursdays each week for the next shifts based on availability.
- \*Please do not cut meat packages apart. This is a food safety issue.
- \*Refrigerated and frozen items need to stay in their respective storage spaces, please do not place refrigerated or frozen items out on the shelves. These items can be listed and posted near the shelf stable milk.
- \*Numbers can be handed out when the shift opens, and the doors should not be opened until the posted time for the shift to open.
- \*Please monitor quantities if you are working out on the floor, but when in doubt...Be Generous!
- \*Please don't allow category substitutions (e.g., double fruit instead of any vegetables)
- \*Please offer to help carry groceries to cars to assist families so that carts stay inside.
- \*Please vacuum at the end of the shift if time permits.
- \*Cardboard should be taken to the recycling bin. Please ask if you aren't sure where to locate the key or the bin.
- \*Please be sure to slide the bar all the way before locking the storage unit. Please ask if you do not know the procedure for getting in to storage. We store lots of plastic bags for client use in the storage unit.
- \*When stocking shelves, please rotate stock. Please stock the shelves whenever there is time—it's always needed!
- \*Please check all windows and doors before leaving each shift to be sure they are locked, and turn the heat down if it is on.