



## Extended Hands Pantry

### 2024 November Newsletter

We've been busy at the pantry!



#### The Website

If you haven't visited in a while, please head over to [www.extendedhandspantry.org](http://www.extendedhandspantry.org) to see our new landing page! While you're there you can find out more about volunteering, donating, and what our guests have had to say about their visits.



#### Letter from the Directors

Are the days and weeks flying by for you? They certainly are for us! With Thanksgiving and Christmas food baskets just around the corner, we continue to see a surge in those seeking food assistance. The number of families visiting the pantry rose 115% by the end of FY 6/30/2023 and another 118% by 6/30/2024—two years

of triple-digit growth, which has been a challenge to manage.

These increases mean we need more—more funding, more food, more volunteers. Did you know that Andy and Jenny are also volunteers? We invite you to join us in this work!

This year, we celebrate two milestones. First, we mark 25 years of ministry to two low-income neighborhoods on Madison's north side, where we've provided school supplies, Christmas gifts, meals, and more. None of this would have been possible without our volunteers—the heart of our mission. Typically, we provide school supplies for 300 children and Christmas gifts for about 550 people.

Second, Extended Hands Pantry turns five! We've been building the infrastructure to serve over 550 families weekly, but the demand continues to grow faster than our resources. Each month brings new families, and scaling to meet this need remains an ongoing challenge.



To all our volunteers—thank you. Your dedication and compassion are the backbone of this work. We are deeply grateful for your support over the years.

Looking ahead, we urgently need your help to continue serving the rising number of families. Whether through donations, volunteer time, or spreading the word, we rely on your generosity to keep growing. We're excited for the next 25 years, but we can't do it without you.

Thank you for believing in our mission to be a servant-hearted expression of love and community. Together, we can keep making a difference.

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" Matthew 25:40

Thank you for all you do for Jesus.

Blessings,

Andy & Jenny Czerkas



## We Did Our First Mission30



With our community's growing needs, we're incredibly grateful for the continued support of our long-time donors. However, as demand

increases, we're also looking for new monthly donors to help us meet these challenges. To support this effort, we launched a 30-day campaign called Mission30, inviting new friends to join our cause. Thanks to the success of this initiative, we're excited to bring it back next year!



## Attic Angels



This quarter, we were proud to partner with Attic Angels, a remarkable volunteer

organization based right here in Madison. Attic Angels honors its volunteers with Halos after 15 years of active service, and every five years thereafter. This year, the Angels had the privilege of recognizing 27 outstanding women for their commitment, with service ranging from 15 to 40 years! We're so grateful for their support and dedication to making a difference for children, seniors, and families in Dane County.



## What's Coming Up Next



Thanksgiving is a time for gathering with loved ones over a

comforting meal, but not everyone can afford that tradition. We want to ensure that no family has to miss out on turkey and all the fixings this holiday.

One young person shared:

*"I grew up very poor—food stamps poor. Thanksgiving was my favorite holiday because we'd get donated baskets with a turkey and all the sides. I'd savor every bite! Wealthier people don't realize how much a free, delicious meal means. Thanksgiving is about being thankful, having a good meal, and spending time with family. I looked forward to it all year."*

If you're able, please donate to help us bring that joy and comfort to families in need this Thanksgiving.



In 2023, we launched the Reverse Advent Box, a fun and meaningful way to teach children the joy of giving. This year, we're excited to bring it back and invite classrooms across Madison to participate in filling both hearts and tummies!

A Reverse Advent Calendar works much like a traditional advent calendar, but with a twist. Instead of receiving a small gift or treat each day leading up to Christmas, children are encouraged to give. Each day for 24 days, they can add an item of food or a household supply to the donation

box, helping to fill it with essentials that a family in need would greatly appreciate during a Wisconsin winter.



Interested in joining? Visit our website to download the Reverse Advent flier. Families, scouts, and youth groups are welcome to take part too—let's make this season one of giving together!





For Giving Tuesday, Andy & Jenny are doubling down! 🎉 Normally, our founders and volunteer directors offer a \$5,000 match, but this year, with our numbers more than doubling, these generous folks are



stepping it up to a \$10,000 match! Your donations will go twice as far in helping us serve more families in need. Together, we can

make a bigger impact than ever before. ❤️ Join us this Giving Tuesday and let's spread the love even further!



### Jenny, Recognized

In September, Jenny was awarded the prestigious Point of Light Award for her dedication to, *“restoring dignity, supporting families, and fighting hunger,”* in Madison. The Point of Light Award, a national recognition,



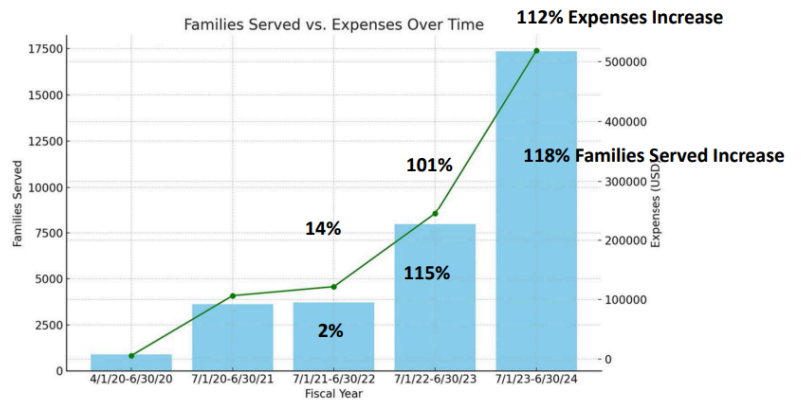
JENNY CIERKAS STANDING UNDER THE LOGO OF THE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION SHE AND HER HUSBAND FOUNDED, EXTENDED HANDS PANTRY.

celebrates individuals who go above and beyond in their communities.

Point of Light, a global nonprofit organization founded to promote volunteerism and social change, acknowledged Jenny's efforts, stating, *“Cultural inclusivity is at the heart of Jenny's work. She ensures that all signage and labels in the food pantry are available in both Spanish and English, recognizing the needs of the diverse populations the pantry serves.”*



### Growth at a Glance



This graph was shared during an adult Sunday school session at Covenant Presbyterian Church. It made quite an impact—a few people audibly gasped when they first saw it! We're grateful for the opportunity to share the important work we're committed to.