

Food: Jaffer feeds those in need through food bank

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Jaffer spent at least 12 hours a week at the food bank during its open hours.

"Then there was a lot of other work that had to go on in keeping up with things," she said. "At that point, we didn't have a truck that brought our food, so I'd have to use our truck and Mo (Pat's husband) helped, and I had a couple other people."

Together, they'd gather up trucks and pick up the food for the pantry each week.

"We'd load our truck to the gills. Sometimes, my truck would be just inches off the ground," Jaffer said. "We'd have to load it and unload it. I did a lot of that, too."

"I think over the time, the best thing that happened is the truck that brings out the food from the Food Share."

The need has not decreased since the food bank's beginning, Jaffer said, though the faces have changed.

"During the '90s and into the 2000s, when migrants were here, we saw probably 66 percent Hispanic and about 33 percent Anglo," Jaffer said. "Over the last few years, with the recession and with the migrants not being here, it's flipped. And of course, during the last recession, there's a lot of people coming in who haven't had to ask for help before."

While asking for help can be hard for people, Jaffer said she and the other volunteers at the food bank try

to make them feel comfortable.

More than anything, Jaffer is just happy to feed people.

"You know you're helping people who might not get something to eat otherwise," she said. "You enjoy meeting most of the people. You form relationships with them."

The community has always stepped up to contribute, Jaffer said.

From schoolrooms to clubs, Scouts to mail carriers, food drives and donations help keep the food bank running and the community eating.

"The college (Western Oregon) has been very supportive," she said. "We'd really be in a mess if we didn't have the college."

The food available at the pantry has changed. Gone is the "government cheese."

"I think people have finally forgotten that cheese," Jaffer said. "For years I was asked whether we had the cheese after it had stopped coming."

Ella Curran has increased the supply of fresh fruits and vegetables — often from the gardens of residents and local family farms. If donations get heavy on a particular type of produce — zucchini or pears, for example — the food bank will put it in a box outside for anybody who will use it, Jaffer said.

"I don't think we've ever actually turned down anything like that," she said. "There are still people who

may have money to buy other things but can't buy fresh vegetables and fruits."

The shelves of Ella Curran — and of food banks around the state — get a little thin during September and October, Jaffer said.

"People seem to forget that people are hungry all year-round," she said. "It picks up again in November and December. I've tried to encourage people to have food drives in September or October rather than in February when everybody's doing it."

Jaffer's service to her community started long before the Ella Curran Food Bank.

She helped build a low-income housing apartment complex in Independence and continues to manage that. She worked with Habitat for Humanity, is active in the Lions Club and in her social concerns group at her church.

"We try to get people to understand the issues that we need to address just as citizens of the world," Jaffer said. "That's kind of hard to do. Most people just don't want to think about it."

Jaffer has been active in the Polk County Democrats, on the Polk County Planning Commission and was a Monmouth city councilor for eight years.

"I've always been involved," she said. "I've always felt that we have a responsibility to others, and to our community, to our state, to our nation, to our world."

Crash: Long road to recovery

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Carey's foot was trapped and the driver's side door would not open, Berry said.

"With the fire growing the whole time, we just went straight out the window at that point," he said.

Carey is grateful that Larson and Berry happened to be in the right place at the right time.

"I talked with Eric Larson on Saturday, and he was sort of recounting the decision points that he had gone through throughout the day to get to that place at that time," Carey said. "He had to get gas: if he had to wait in line or if he hadn't had to wait in line. The breakfast: how long do you take over that last cup of coffee? Any number of decisions" could have ended things differently.

He said that, in his view, the people at the sheriff's office have the toughest job,

regardless of which county they work in.

"They do untold good all the time," Carey said. "This is an act of heroism that is repeated — maybe not on the same scale, but on a similar scale. Any chance we have to give a shout out to public servants and law enforcement is a good thing."

Berry, who has worked as a volunteer firefighter and as a reserve deputy, said it's the training that gets him through difficult situations.

"You have to work through those things mentally before you can do them physically," he said.

Firefighters responded to the car fire and the trees around it, Berry said.

"There was a fair amount of magnesium in there," he said. "Magnesium burns very readily and is very difficult to put out. (Firefighters) had to pull (the car) up out

of the ditch before they could completely put it out. It burnt for some time."

Carey was not speeding at the time of the accident, which is still under investigation, Berry said.

"It's not what you expect when you wake up most mornings," he said.

Carey was taken to Salem Hospital and released on Saturday. He said he still has a long road ahead with recovery, including surgeries for his wrist and ankle.

He hasn't seen the video from Larson's dash cam, but friends have described the images to him.

"It's a little disturbing that it went to flames so quickly," Carey said. "On the other hand, that could have been a real anomaly. The fact that I got through it with relatively little injury is pretty impressive to the BMW design."



JOLENE GUZMAN/Itemizer-Observer

Firefighters check to see if the fire is completely out at Forest River on Thursday.

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Fire: Sprinklers save building

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Firefighters used the department's ladder truck to access the roof, where they inspected the burnt section to make sure the fire was completely extinguished. Within an hour of the call coming in, the crew had turned its attention to mop up duties.

"We are doing anything we can to prevent any more damage than what had already happened," Hertel said.

Hertel added that had the fire not been stopped promptly, it could have been devastating for the compa-

ny — and for the Dallas economy — as Forest River is a top employer in the area.

"We are glad that they had a sprinkler system that prevented the potential of putting them out of business," Hertel said.

Forest River canceled shifts the remainder of Thursday and Friday, but crews were back at work on Monday.

NW Natural, Pacific Power, and Polk No. 1 assisted Dallas Fire and EMS on the scene. The Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office conducted the investigation after the fire.

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