

Join Vernonia Cares for a look at a typical day at the food bank

provided by Vernonia Cares
 Due to current economic conditions, many people may find they need a little help with their grocery budget. Because first-time visitors to Vernonia Cares Food Bank (VCFB) may not be sure what to expect, this article describes a typical visit. After entering the front doors of the building, clients register with Tina at the reception desk. Registration includes basic information about the client's household such as names, ages, and date of birth for each person living at their address.

New clients will be asked to show ID verifying they live at the address given. A driver's license, rent or utility receipt, or just a letter that came to the person at the stated address is sufficient. As Tina gathers this information, she prints the completed form and the client signs the application. The target population for VCFB is households that fall within the USDA income guidelines. Those guidelines are currently a base monthly income of \$1,670 for one person plus \$577 per additional household member.

The registration process usually takes less than fifteen minutes; this application remains on file for one year. All clients' names are kept confidential. If the client returns within the year, and no changes have occurred within the household, the process is even quicker. The application is simply signed for the new month's groceries and the shopping begins. Tina will ask a few food questions so the frozen and refrigerated portion of the order can be filled by volunteers while the client begins shop-

ping. A VCFB volunteer will become a personal shopping assistant to this new client. The goal of VCFB is to provide three days of groceries, given once a month. Quantities of food are tailored to the household size. Carts with boxes and bags are filled with non-perishable groceries as the client and volunteer stroll past the shelves of food. This permits the client to indicate his or her household's food preferences.

"There's no use giving a family a can of pickled beets if no one likes them!" VCFB President Carolyn Velasco said, "This shopping-style pantry helps eliminate wasted food. We appreciate the ability to be a user-friendly food pantry for our clients."

At the end of the shopping, the client adds a few loaves of bread to his or her order. The sack of frozen and refrigerated items is placed on the cart. If the client is able, he or she is asked to help defray the cost of the bread delivery by adding to a donation box located at the registration table. (Bread is donated to VCFB from Safeway in Forest Grove. The funds help pay for the cost of transportation to Vernonia.) The cart is then wheeled to the client's car, the food is unloaded and the cart is returned into the building. Bread is available once a week; pantry orders are available once a month. A typical order for a household size of four is pictured with this article.

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Vernonia Cares volunteers, Tina Brewington, Penny Dean, Barbara Rainbolt, and Dave Howard shown with a 3-day food supply. Photo courtesy of Vernonia Cares.

Win cash for best student photo

As part of National Public Health Week (April 6-12), Northwest Health Foundation and the Oregon State Public Health Division are sponsoring a photo contest for Oregon students aged 13-18. Cash prizes are provided by the Northwest Health Foundation.

Students are asked to use digital cameras to capture images of what they believe makes a healthy community. They should submit their original photos, by March 31, to the Community Health Priorities website: www.communityhealthpriorities.org. Community Health Priorities is a statewide initiative of the Northwest Health Foundation aimed at creating environments where everyone can be healthy through community dialogue and public policy.

Winning photos will be exhibited on the Community Health Priorities website and during Public Health Week in Portland at the Portland State

Office Building, 800 NE Oregon St. in Portland, and at the State Capitol in Salem.

The following prizes will be awarded: 1st Prize \$250; 2nd Prize \$100 and 3rd Prize \$50.

Students are encouraged to consider any of the following themes in submitting their entries

Creative: How can you get people to understand that health can be looked at in so many different ways? See if you can find creative ways to portray healthy (or unhealthy) situations.

Ironic: The world around us is full of contradictions or ironies. In public health this can take many forms. Can you capture this?

Persuasive: Can you take a picture that might persuade someone to change an unhealthy behavior? Or take on a certain healthy behavior or activity?

More details, including rules and submission information, may be found on the Community Health Priorities website.

The mission of the Northwest Health Foundation is to advance, support and promote the health of communities in Oregon and southwest Washington.

More information at www.nwhf.org or contact Chris Palmedo at mcpalmedo@nwhf.org



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