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NW COMMUNITY FOOD

PANTRYNOTES

Spring | 2026



Judith Ingram
Founder and
Director, NWCF

A message from Judith Ingram, NWCF Founder and Director

Days are getting longer, skies are brighter, and we could not be happier to see Spring. Thanks to all of you who shoveled snow, de-iced walkways, and did what was needed to get us through the unusually frigid, wet, windy winter of 2026.

This spring marks a milestone for NW Community Food (NWCF): our five-year anniversary. When we opened in May of 2021, we served about 50 families and individuals a week. Today, that number is around 390. NWCF's guests come from across the city, but one-third live in food-insecure households in the pantry's 20008 ZIP code.

We grew to meet a need that was hiding in plain sight.

We could not have predicted how much demand would continue to grow in the wake of the pandemic that sparked the creation of our pantry, and we are more committed than ever to fighting food insecurity.

We are grateful to our dedicated volunteers and donors for continuing to grow and find new ways to improve our operations. Thank you for all you've done. If you want to support our work, we appreciate all donations. Click here to donate.

The pantry is now focused on better supporting the guests we have and optimizing their experience. In this issue of *Pantry Notes,* we shine a light on some of the ways we're accomplishing that.

— Judy

Practicing loving-kindness

Scheduling System

We've instituted an easy appointment system for guests, which keeps the line moving and helps volunteers gauge demand throughout the Sunday shift.

It is most important for cutting long wait times for guests and respecting their time. It's also a touch point that helps us assess whether guests need help connecting to other social services. On the volunteer side, it allows us to quickly and accurately crunch numbers and analyze attendance data and trends.



Volunteers Amy, Carol, and Lynn sign in guests for their scheduled appointment before they move through the pantry line.

Language Interpreters

In addition to several multi-lingual volunteers, we now have translators helping native Mandarin speakers better navigate the line and feel less isolated.



Volunteers Eulynn and her son Kai, translators for our Mandarin-speaking guests, display a traditional Lunar New Year "tray of togetherness" gift they received from a pantry guest.

Culinary Inspiration

A monthly Healthy Sampling Table allows guests to try foods that might be new to them and get recipes for creating tasty fare.



Volunteer Kennedy gets ready to show guests different ways to spice up canned chickpeas.

Goodness by the pound



JANUARY
APPLES



FEBRUARY
CABBAGE + GREENS



MARCH
CAULIFLOWER

We love our volunteers!

Pantry Pals

Leena and Adell volunteered side by side at the pantry for an entire year before they realized they were neighbors living just five houses apart. The dynamic duo of the Baked Goods Table volunteer every Sunday, distributing baguettes, muffins, loaves of fresh bread, cookies, pastries, and cakes to pantry guests. No matter how long guests wait in line in all kinds of weather, or how heavy their bags get, many stop to give Leena and Adell a hug or deliver a friendly greeting.



Volunteers Leena (left) and Adell (right)

"The guests don't hesitate to tell us how much they appreciate what we

do," says Adell. "Their kind words keep me coming back."



Thanks, partner!

The Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB) distributed 10.7 million nutritious meals in DC in 2025. NW Community Food (NWCF) is one of CAFB's largest distribution partners in Ward 3, where it distributes 60% of CAFB's 193,000 meals.

Boxes of frozen chicken, pallets of root vegetables, bins of squash or apples: These are a few examples of the thousands of pounds of fresh food that CAFB provides NWCF week in, week out. CAFB has partnered with the pantry since 2022.

"NW Community Food is our anchor in Ward 3," says Laura Jeske, Senior Director of CAFB's DC Region. "We couldn't meet the need here without them."

The feeling is mutual.

> **The Capital Area Food Bank has enabled us to ramp up and sustain our operations by providing not only foodstuffs but also expertise, guidance, and economies of scale.**

CAFB sources huge quantities of perishable and nonperishable foods, including produce and protein, making it more affordable for food pantries to purchase. CAFB also offers items like cans of beans or tuna for free, which enables NWCF to stretch its budget amid increased need. As a CAFB partner, NWCF is part of a regional network, enabling it to learn best practices and access resources, including grant opportunities and courses on food safety.

We do not pay CAFB for any produce. We pay a discounted rate for most canned/boxed foods, and since last fall, have received some of that usually discounted food, plus sometimes eggs and chicken, gratis.

CAFB also collects data and produces an annual hunger report and impact report. Its heat map illustrates NWCF's challenge in Ward 3. Jeske says many DC residents don't always recognize the depth and breadth of food insecurity throughout the city. "CAFB is very grateful for partners like NWCF who can step up to meet the need." Learn more about the Capital Area Food Bank here.

Gratitude

Thank you, Van Ness Main Street and Yoga on Connecticut Avenue, for donating proceeds from their new community-based yoga classes to NW Community Food. Sign up @yogaonconnecticut for Saturday and Thursday classes.



Want to help? We'd love it!



DONATE

Your financial support keeps shelves stocked and fridges full.



BRING FOOD

Drop off non-perishable items and household supplies on Saturdays and Sundays, 10am-3pm.



VOLUNTEER

Sign up to join our volunteer team—sorting food, greeting guests, or making home deliveries.

NW Community Food | 4225 Connecticut Avenue NW | Washington, DC 20008
EIN 92-1285692

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