

The JHS food pantry in the midst of a shortage

By Haylee Hedrick

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The JHS food pantry has been helping supply families in need with food since the 2014-2015 school year. Lately, the food pantry has had a shortage of food.

One of Jeff High's biggest problem has nothing to do with grades or attendance -- it's about hunger.

Almost 60-percent of students in the Greater Clark County School district qualify for free or reduced lunch, with 55-percent of the JHS student body alone qualifying. In comparison, roughly 35-percent of students at Charlestown High School and nine-percent of students at Floyd Central qualify for the program.

To combat the growing food issues within the community, JHS applied for a grant for a food pantry during the 2014-15 school year. The school received \$1,000 from the Community Foundation, and GenerationOn gave \$250 to start up the collection of food.

Thanks to those donations, the JHS food pantry allows students to take a cinch bag home containing food for them and their families.

“Every student needs something to be successful, and this (food) is what these students need.”

-assistant principal Marianne Fisher

However now, the food pantry isn't stocked well enough, and is too low in funds to provide meals for all the students that it should benefit at JHS. This is a huge issue, according to Fisher, considering one-fourth of the school uses the pantry weekly, with students getting their main meal of their day from school.

That results in the weekends being a recurring struggle for families. Several families don't even get to eat as a family, each individual eats whenever the opportunity presents itself.

“We don't really have any food in the house at all except a can of corn,” said an anonymous JHS student that uses the pantry. “Now we can have a real meal together as a family.”

Who this helps

There are a significant amount of students among the JHS student body that cannot rely on stocked cabinets or kitchens at home on a day-to-day basis, mostly due to homelife difficulties, financially or otherwise.

Inside the walls of JHS, there are all levels of poverty, ranging from homeless

students, to students who have a home, but the family cannot afford enough food on the weekends for essential meals.

With the pantry, however, students can go home for a weekend and not have the worries of where their next meal might come from.

“I can't thank (the pantry) enough for helping me out,” the anonymous student said. “I didn't know what I was going to do while my dad was gone.”

How to help stock the food pantry

The 45-percent of students at JHS that are not on free or reduced lunch can help the other half by bringing in items and food for their peers and classmates.

Non-perishable items that are lightweight and easy to put into cinch bags are needed. Pop-tarts, peanut butter sandwich crackers, mac n cheese and ramen noodles are items students usually enjoy receiving the most.

Canned goods and frozen items are not unacceptable, but are not preferred, due to storage limitations. The cans are too heavy to put in the cinch bags that are sent home with students, and the school has no way to keep the frozen items cold.

Currently, Key Club is the main JHS group that stocks the food pantry; however Fisher welcomes other groups to donate items they deem appropriate.

“Donating to the food pantry gets (students) needed service hours, plus you get to help support your fellow students, friends and peers,” Key Club president Caroline Elliott said. “You could be helping one of your best friends and you don't even know it.”

If you are interested in donating, bring items to Dr. Fisher's office (A137). She will also answer any questions regarding food pantry items, including inclusion in the program, at mfisher@gccschools.com.



The food pantry at JHS is in need of more food to help support students that are in need.

Photos by Haylee Hedrick

Items you can bring in to help the pantry:

- Mac and cheese
- Sealed jelly packages
- Pasta (in box/plastic)
- Ramen noodles
- Poptarts
- Powdered milk
- Cereals (box, bag, or cup)
- Boxes of rice
- Boxes of cookies
- PB jars
- PB sandwich crackers
- Soups in plastic containers.

Special thanks to the following cafeteria workers who are retiring/plan to retire this school year:

- Margie Potts: October 1992 - September 2017
- Anita Walden: September 1979 - October 2017
- Genevieve Griffin: November 2003 - October 2017
- Barbara Growe: October 1992 - November 2017