

# Feeding the Hungry . . .

Shirley Cade director of St. Leo's food pantry takes the corporal and spiritual works of mercy very seriously and in feeding the hungry, she also gives a large helping of listening, love, care and respect.

She's been offering that to the increasing number of people (now often 1300) who come to the pantry each for more than 18 years. And in true St. Leo fashion, she came about this through the circuitous way God often chooses to use.

Shirley had worked as a legal secretary and a day care provider and didn't have contact with St. Leo's or North Fairmount until her parents joined the senior center here. They benefitted so much that she decided she wanted to give back to the neighborhood and began helping out at the food pantry, working with Henry Robison, the "St. Joseph" of St. Leo's who founded the pantry. She took over as director in 1998.

When most people go to a food pantry they come out with a few small bags of canned goods and staples. When people come to the St. Leo pantry, it's almost like they've been shopping at the store. In addition to canned goods and staples, they also walk away with meat and produce—and even sometimes with cut flowers to brighten their days.

Shirley really knows how to stretch a dollar. She once won an award from the Freestore/Foodbank for the pantry that got the most pounds of food for their money. She's made connections with food stores that share their surplus and St. Leo partners and benefactors have been very generous in collecting food. "As we get more people coming for food, God provides what we need—and more!"

Making sure that people have food is always on Shirley's mind. Once when she was at the food bank and slipped breaking her hip, she made sure the food she had just chosen was credited to St. Leo's.

Then the ambulance could take her to the hospital. She healed and came back and continues to work tirelessly at the pantry. She believes it's where God wants her to be.



The annual Hunger Walk on Memorial Day is the main fund raising event for the pantry. The money pledged for walkers is put on account at the Freestore/Foodbank and enables pantries to buy food there throughout the year. Most years, money raised through the walk carries the pantry through until the next year.

While food donations are abundant during the holidays, the need continues throughout the year as does the need for volunteers. Those who get involved discover it's an experience that changes their lives. To donate food or to volunteer, call St. Leo's 921-1044.

And as the food and volunteers increase you might find Shirley dancing for joy—dancing is another one of her many talents.

—Angela Anno, Pastoral Associate