

LACARE FOOD PANTRY CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

LACare began with an \$800.00 donation from the Highland Lakes Ministerial Alliance which consisted of five area churches: First Christian, St. Paul's Episcopal, Christ is the Light Fellowship, Burnet Presbyterian, and First United Methodist. The Old Masonic Lodge, 313 S. Main Street in Burnet, offered a room, 2 shelves, 1 desk and 2 chairs, and on June 3, 1985, LACare officially opened. The founders of LACare were Father Jim Wooldridge of St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Reverend Robert (Bob) Howard of First Christian Church. The first President was Bill Goble.

Other churches were encouraged to join with LACare and soon Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic Church and First Lutheran were on board. The goal was and continues to be to attempt to meet these basic human needs in our area: food and transient assistance. The hope was that in pooling the church's resources, LACare would be able to meet the needs of more Burnet residents. Donations of food and cash were brought directly to LACare as well as donations of time and talent. The pantry was open Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM most weeks. By July, 1985, 20 families representing 59 people had been served and by Christmas, a Share A Toy Drive was successful in providing a merry Christmas to needy children in the area.

Between 1986 and 1995, LACare moved twice before finally settling in a trailer on property generously donated by Our Mother of Sorrows. As the needs of the community grew, more and more churches, civic organizations and schools participated with food drives and monetary donations. Radio and television stations and USPS also sponsor food and toy drives that benefit LACare. Ms. Lottie McCorkle was hired in 2003 as Director of the growing pantry. In 2005, the present building was completed, a far cry from 2 shelves and a desk!

Currently, LACare is open three days per week: 2-6 PM on Mondays, and 10-2 on Wednesdays and Fridays. It has entered the electronic age with digital client files. There are approximately 60 volunteers serving over 1000 individuals each month. Food is still donated by the community and supplemented with purchases from the Capital Area Food Bank, HEB and Sysco. Beginning in 2024, clients shop the shelves and choose their own groceries, bread, and produce with guidance from the volunteers.

For 40 years, LACare has served the residents in the Burnet area with love, kindness, and an attentiveness to the changing needs of the people. The 40th Anniversary will be celebrated on Saturday, June 21 with an Open House from 2:00 to 4:00 PM at the LACare Food Pantry located on the West side of Our Mother of Sorrows Catholic church parking lot. The public is invited to tour the facility and enjoy light refreshments.