



# COMMUNITY DRIVE-THRU EVENT

All Are Welcome



Submitted by Bobbie Pope & Vaughn Dunnigan

## ... Love Thy Neighbor ...

Members and Co-Directors of the Shallowford Food Pantry Bobbie Pope and Vaughn Dunnigan had dreamt of hosting a drive-through food assistance event for a while, but like all ideas, they knew it would be a significant lift.

"This summer, we got serious about the idea to help feed local families needing food assistance this Thanksgiving Holiday. Part of what drove us is the considerable increase in traffic the Food Pantry has experienced this year," said Vaughn. "We have served 50% more people than in recent years, bringing us back to pre-pandemic traffic levels."

Bobbie and Vaughn quickly announced the drive-through event to Shallowford's Mission Committee. The second course of action was meeting with Rev. Catherine E. Foster, Associate Pastor for Mission & Adult Discipleship, and brainstorming items in each box.

Bobbie shared, "It was important for us to provide ingredients/items for families to make a traditional Thanksgiving dinner. We agreed that each box would include mashed potatoes, stuffing, yams, cranberry sauce, and ingredients for green bean casserole and gravy."

Later, the group met with Rebecca Porter, Shallowford's Director of Communications, to share ideas and brainstorm ways to invite local food pantries and neighbors to participate.

"With the help of Food Pantry volunteers and members of Shallowford Presbyterian Women (SPW), we purchased 200 of each item, plus 100 turkeys. This involved daily shopping trips, sometimes to more than one store a day. If we purchased all the stuffing at one Aldi location, we knew we were headed to the next Aldi!

In mid-October, Vaughn and Bobbie met with Catherine one last time to discuss the day of event logistics. During that meeting, any skepticism that may have been present began to subside. It wasn't until late October when a crew of SPW members helped Bobbie and Vaughn move all food items into the Youth Center that the skepticism dissipated. The two leaders were moved to tears. This event was coming to life in the most beautiful ways.

The following week, 60 of Shallowford's 6th through 12th graders taped and filled boxes with all 2,200 items. Included in each box was a card from a student from Shallowford's Children's Ministry and the Shallowford School. Rumor has it that the packing was very exuberant.

"A heartfelt thank you to the staff at Publix at Shallowford Exchange. They ordered and sold us



Shallowford volunteers of all ages came out to help.



Bobbie Pope and Vaughn Dunnigan, Food Pantry Directors



All 200 Thanksgiving Dinner-In-A-Box packages.

100 turkeys at a discounted price and let us keep them in their freezers until the big day. They even helped load our trucks when we picked them up," expressed Vaughn.

More than 50 Shallowford volunteers came out to support the event. They moved boxes and turkeys, set out traffic cones, and did whatever else was needed.

"The first neighbor to arrive was in our parking lot by 7:30 a.m. We also noticed two women in line who had walked to the church, one carrying a baby and the other pulling a wagon. We quickly pulled them out of the line and served them first."

Many cars in line represented two to three families. By morning's end, we had served 86 local neighbors and their families a Thanksgiving dinner-in-a-box, plus a turkey.

"The planning and work that went into this event was intense. We could never have done it without the help of so many, for which we are very grateful. We look forward to this being our first drive-through, not our last!"



### About the Food Pantry

Shallowford's Food Pantry provides temporary or emergency food assistance, including groceries, for over 400 families per year and distributes more than 15,000 pounds of food per year. The pantry is open every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

[shallowford.org/food-pantry](http://shallowford.org/food-pantry)