

Shepherd's Heart Pantry Needs a Home

Shepherd's Heart, a humble 501(c)3 food pantry ministry in Waco, was able to bless over 150 families a week for about five years, offering them food, counseling, and prayers. Although they were only able to open the doors once a week for two hours, they assisted *thousands* of people in that timespan from their North Waco location.

Bob Gager, a board member of the ministry whose passion is to spread the love of God through ministries like this food pantry, has been in food ministry for twenty years. "This is something that God put on my heart years ago," Gager says, "and it's never left. We're always going to have the poor with us, and we're called to minister to them." Shepherd's Heart definitely accomplished this for years, giving away about 10,000 pounds of food a week to disadvantaged families.

Unfortunately, the church that housed the ministry moved to a much smaller location last fall, and now it doesn't have enough space for the food pantry. Gager and the other board members (Mickey Lavy and Wanda Fountain) still have high hopes for the future of Shepherd's Heart. "What our heart is, is to re-open it as an independent pantry," Gager says.

To do this, they'll need a building, and for a building, they'll need funds. They hope to inspire involvement of the community, the youth, and of many surrounding churches. "If they will help fund this effort, through their donations, we'll be able to do a much greater project," Gager says. "Where we were feeding 150 families a week, we hope to feed 200-300 families a week."

As the economic recession continues to affect our community, the need for food will continue to grow, and therefore the need for more volunteers will grow. Gager says that since Shepherd's Heart is run strictly on a volunteer basis, in order to run the successful, effective operation that he hopes to soon, Shepherd's Heart will need about twenty volunteers to assist with distribution, counseling, paperwork, unloading, organizing, and handing out the food.

With the help of volunteers, the operation of Shepherd's Heart could make a positive change in this city. This charity ministry that once served thousands of people a week is in dire need of a home and of funds to support it. As they wait patiently for God's plan to unfold, Gager and the board will continue in their organizing, planning, and praying for the future of Shepherd's Heart.

If you know of a building available for Shepherd's Heart food pantry ministry or you're interested in volunteering, contact Bob Gager at (254)-722-9517 or at bob@daydreamcards.com.

--by Audrey Cary, *Seeds of Hope intern*