



## The Alleghany Foundation Helps Feed the Hungry

For 25 years, the C.O.P.E. Food Pantry has helped income-eligible residents of the Alleghany Highlands put food on the table. Each week, pantry manager Eddie Williams, and his all-volunteer workforce, collect, purchase, assemble and distribute boxes of nutritionally balanced food to help supplement a family's or individual's needs for a month.

### COPE Program Volunteers.



From left to right in photo: Jim Eller, Foundation Board Member, Eddie Williams and Jack Butler,

**Photo Courtesy of Gavin Dressler, Virginian Review**

While not affiliated with a specific religion, the C.O.P.E. Food Pantry operates out of the basement of the McCallister Presbyterian Church, serving western Alleghany County and Covington from the Island Ford Bridge to the West Virginia Line. In addition to the all-volunteer workforce, which Williams says are “second to none”, the Pantry relies solely on donations of food and money from civic organizations, churches, school and youth groups, local companies, individuals – and most recently, a grant from The Alleghany Foundation.

“It’s a real community effort,” says Williams, who has been with the program since the beginning. “The Alleghany Highlands has such generous people. We’ve had more donations this year than any other year.” Williams gives an example of a recent Saturday food drive at Wal-Mart, where the VFW raised about \$850.00 and collected 554 canned goods.

The VFW is one of many local organizations and groups making an impact, but like food pantries across the nation, the program is at its limit as state budgets are slashed and unemployment rates rise.

“We fed 454 families in July. That was a record for us,” says Williams. “We expect our expenses to increase over 60% this year.”

In 2008, the food pantry expenses were \$17,000; this year it’s estimated to be over \$27,000. “But, we don’t turn anyone away. We do everything we can to supply enough food for everyone,” says Williams.

That’s why he applied for a \$5,000 grant from The Alleghany Foundation to help purchase food that will help about 885 families or 2,615 individuals, over two or three months.

But, the rising number of people receiving food from the pantry is only part of the reason for the expense increase. In June of 2008, the local Southwest Virginia Second Harvest Food Bank, the main supplier and storehouse for perishable foods, closed its doors in Covington. Now Williams places orders much more frequently, from different sources, because he doesn’t have enough storage at the church, just a freezer and a refrigerator purchased in 2001 with funding from The Alleghany Foundation. Food is now purchased mostly from local stores, and some from the Second Harvest Food Bank headquarters in Salem, VA which is delivered weekly to Covington in a refrigerated truck, also funded by the Foundation in a previous grant to the Second Harvest Food Bank.

Though the closing of the local branch of the food bank has necessitated the need for more donations and a workload increase, the good news is that the majority of money donations are going back into the local economy.

“We feel better knowing that fewer people are going to bed hungry each night,” says Williams, and he thanks the tireless volunteers, generous donations and The Alleghany Foundation grant which supplemented close to 20% of the pantry’s expenses this year.

“We’re proud to be part of this community effort,” says Beth Webb, Executive Director for The Alleghany Foundation. “The food pantry is a well-organized operation thanks to Eddie Williams and all the great volunteers. We wish them all the best as they strive to meet their goals.”

C.O.P.E. stands for Christians Overcoming Problems of the Economy, an organization comprised of about 25 churches, established to help residents with fuel bills, clothing and other necessities. The Food Pantry is a part of this organization, but is run separately. The Food Pantry is open every Thursday from 9:00 am to noon in the basement of McCallister Presbyterian Church. Anyone in need should visit the Pantry between 9:00 am – Noon on Thursdays to fill out an application to determine eligibility

Since its inception, the foundation has granted over \$28 million to the following 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations with the purpose of improving the quality of life in the Alleghany Highlands:

- Alleghany County
- Alleghany County Parks and Recreation
- Alleghany County Public Schools
- Alleghany County Sheriff's Office
- Alleghany County United Fire and Rescue Association
- Alleghany Health District
- Alleghany Highlands Arts & Crafts Center
- Alleghany Highlands Arts Council
- Alleghany Highlands Community Services Board
- Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Authority
- Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation
- Alleghany Highlands Free Clinic
- Alleghany Highlands Genealogical Society
- Alleghany Highlands YMCA
- Alleghany Highlands Youth Soccer Association
- Alleghany Historical Society
- Alleghany Humane Society
- Alleghany Mountain Radio
- American Diabetes Association
- American Red Cross
- Appalfolks of America
- Art Museum of Western Virginia
- Bath County

Bath County Health Department  
Bath County Historical Society  
Bear Trust International  
Blue Ridge Public Television  
Boiling Springs Elementary School  
Boiling Springs Fire Department  
C.O.P.E.  
C & O Historical Society  
Callaghan Elementary School PTO  
Charles P. Jones Memorial Library  
City of Covington  
Clifton Forge Little League  
Clifton Forge Main Street  
Clifton Forge Nursery School  
Clifton Forge Public Library  
Clifton Forge Volunteer Fire Department  
Covington City Schools  
Covington Fire Department  
Covington Rescue Squad  
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College  
Diabetes Education Support Group  
Falling Spring Elementary School PTO  
Falling Spring Fire Department  
Falling Spring Rescue Squad  
Greater Alleghany Highlands School Health Consortium  
Jackson River Enterprises  
Jackson river Technical Center

Local Office on Aging  
Mill Mountain Theatre  
Mountain Soil and Water Conservation District  
Mountain View Elementary School PTO  
Rockbridge Area Community Services Board  
Safehome Systems  
Science Museum of Western Virginia  
Scott Hill Foundation, Inc.  
Sharon Elementary School PTO  
Sharon Volunteer Fire Department  
Shenandoah Autism Center  
Southwest Virginia AHEC  
Southwest Virginia Second Harvest Foodbank  
Special Olympics  
Total Action Against Poverty  
Town of Clifton  
Forge  
Town of Iron Gate  
Unified Human Services Transportation System (RADAR)  
Virginia Hunters Who Care  
West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine  
Western Virginia Emergency Medical Service Council