

FILLING ORDERS: Volunteer Diana Geddes fills orders at the Emergency Community Food Pantry of Franklin County.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Food Pantry to host Virtual Food Drive

By Hannah Brown
The State Journal

Typically in May, the Emergency Community Food Pantry of Franklin County has two large food drives, but because of social distancing guidelines to protect people from COVID-19, the drives are canceled, causing organizers to come up with a new plan to get people the food they need.

One of the two drives canceled was through the U.S. Postal Service while the other was an Interfaith Food Drive, in which local churches of all denominations collected food for the pantry.

"In order to replace those two drives, we're going to do a virtual drive," said Regina Wink-Swinford, board president for food pantry.

The drive will collect monetary donations through the food pantry's website, www.frankfortfoodpantry.org.

Donations are already being collected, but on May 1 the pantry will launch a social media and advertising campaign urging people to donate.

Donors can contribute as much or as little as they can, but to offer perspective, Wink-Swinford explained that a single donation of \$32 feeds a family of two for a week.

Wink-Swinford said monetary donations actually go further because it allows the organization to purchase food in bulk.

"We're able to get better prices than at a grocery store," she said.

The food will be purchased from Kroger and God's Food Pantry.

The pandemic has also affected the food pantry's operations. Those requesting food used to be able to get their orders filled the same day, but now they have to wait until the next day so that food pantry volunteers have time to fill the request.

"We used to staff 12 volunteers at a time," Wink-Swinford said. "Now, we have no more than four volunteers at a time filling orders. The fewer people that handle the food, the better."

The drive will last the entire month

of May. Wink-Swinford said the pantry's goal is to raise \$24,000, which should be enough to purchase two months of groceries, however demands on the food pantry have increased substantially because of the pandemic.

Wink-Swinford said the pantry already had a record year as far as how many people it helped in 2019, and so far in 2020, is again experiencing record-breaking months.

In 2019, the food pantry served 10,887 people. So far in 2020, it has served 3,436 people.

"That represents 72,000 meals we've sent out" in 2020, Wink-Swinford said.

For the first six months of 2019, the pantry helped 5,194 people, and through the first three months of this year, the pantry was on track to beat that number.

"We were already breaking records before (the pandemic) hit," she said. "We already had a population of folks who were food insecure. That number has grown because of unemployment."

Wink-Swinford is hoping that the food pantry can help fill the gaps for families.

"If we provide food, then maybe that family can pay their rent or buy the medications they need."

The food pantry has also received a grant for \$10,000 from the Coronavirus Relief Fund of the Blue Grass Foundation in partnership with United Way of the Bluegrass.

To get food to the people in the community who need it, the pantry partners with organizations such as the Salvation Army and churches. Those in need can fill out an application through that organization, which then sends the applications to Resource Office for Social Ministries (ROSM), which reviews the application. Orders for those applicants are then sent to the food pantry to be filled and sent back to the organization for distribution.

"We are all volunteers," Wink-Swinford said. "We don't have a paid staff member. All donations go to purchase food and keep refrigerators running."

"Our food pantry is all about neighbors helping neighbors."

Dufour, Strong co-leading local climate strike group

Social issues have always been on the radar for Natalie Dufour and Emma Strong.

The two are the co-leaders of the recently founded Frankfort chapter of the Kentucky Youth Climate Strike, which, according to its website, is a state-wide movement of middle school, high school and college-age students fighting for bold climate action across Kentucky.

Dufour, the daughter of Chris Schimmoeller and Joel Dufour, is a junior at Franklin County. Strong, the daughter of Diane Strong and Danny Strong, is a homeschooled sophomore who is taught by her mother.

"I've been cognizant of climate change for my entire life," Dufour said. "Mom is an environmental activist (she's part of Woods and Waters Land Trust, Envision Franklin County, Kentucky Heartwood and many other groups) and she has inspired me to become an activist. Because of my upbringing I have always wanted to protect our earth; however, until this September, I hadn't taken action into my own hands."

That's when, for the international climate strike on Sept. 20, Dufour organized a rally in Frankfort that had more than 250 people in attendance.

"This really set me on the trajectory to become more involved in the climate movement," Dufour said. "The threats from climate change are enormous. We are already destroying ecosystems and wiping out species. The rising sea levels are going to displace people, which is going to cause many social and economic problems. If we don't start to drastically changing our society now, our world will look very different for our children."

Strong also grew up working for different causes.

"I have always been interested in environmental issues for as long as I remember," she said. "I didn't quite understand the idea of global warming when I was younger. But I always worried about the trash in the ditches and how it affected the wildlife. I tried to help by fundraising in every way I could."

"When I was older, I learned that climate change affects all aspects of our ecosystem. Even if our planet warms by two degrees, it affects everyone."

The local chapter has several objectives.

"Our main goal is net zero carbon emissions by 2030," Strong said. "To accomplish this we need to take steps in every aspect. The goals I personally am excited to see are building green streets, bike lanes, expanding

education of climate change in our schools, and advocating for a greener Kentucky. As the capital of Kentucky, our students should feel confident in standing up for what they believe in."

"I definitely want to see the Frankfort Chapter grow and become a known presence in Frankfort," Dufour said. "I want to work on getting recycling in schools throughout the county. We will also be working on advocating for green streets, community gardens and environmentally friendly practices from businesses. We will also work to support various climate friendly bills."

"However, our main goal is to get Kentucky to net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Although we will fight for more eco friendly practices such as recycling, green streets and community gardens, our biggest target will be the fossil fuel industry. This industry is the one creating the climate problem in the first place, and something has to be done to stop them. This will most likely involve working more closely with the state organization."

Dufour works with the state organization and is the state co-logistics director.

"I love being part of a group of people my age who care about the future of our planet," she said. "I have a connection to other young people that I wouldn't have with adults."

Dufour reached out to Strong about two weeks ago to co-lead the local chapter with her, and they have about 30 members.

Most of the members are in high school, with one middle school student and one college-age student in the chapter.

Saturday is the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, and for Earth Week this week, a variety of events have been organized that people can participate in online. The state website is climates-trikeky.weebly.com.

Dufour and Strong are both determined to bring about change, and they don't see their age as a deterrent.

"It's actually a plus in some ways," Strong said. "We draw attention to serious issues because of our age. You're used to seeing adults fighting for a cause; it's much different when millions of kids are striking because they're worried about their future. That gets people's attention."

"I think that as youth, we have a powerful message," Dufour said. "We are fighting for our world and we are fighting for what's right. We have power just through this. I think that adults will definitely take us seriously because we are fighting for our future."



By Linda Younkin
The State Journal



Emma Strong



Natalie Dufour

WALKING TRAILS, GOLF COURSE TO REOPEN AT LAKEVIEW PARK

State Journal staff report

A portion of Lakeview Park will reopen to the public today.

According to a Franklin County Fiscal Court Facebook post, only the walking trails and the golf course will reopen.

The golf course will be limited to walking players only, and since the pro shop is closed, there will be no charge to use the course.

"These spaces are open under the condition that social distancing guidelines are maintained during your entire visit," the post reads.

Golf cart rentals, restrooms, skatepark, volleyball and pickleball courts, dog park, disc golf course, playground, softball fields, pavilions and all other park facilities will remain closed.

Lakeview Park has been closed since late March as it served as the site for drive-through COVID-19 testing for the Kentucky Department of Public Health, Kroger and the Franklin County Health Department.

FCHD Deputy Director Brittany Parker said there are no drive-through testing dates scheduled for Lakeview in the immediate future.

ate future.

During Friday's Franklin County Fiscal Court meeting, Frankfort-Franklin County Emergency Management Director Tommy Russell said all the tents and supplies would be broken down and removed from the park.

2020 Candidate Directory

The following candidates have authorized The State Journal to announce their candidacies in the June 23 primary election.
To add your name to the directory, Call us at 502-227-4556

City of Frankfort

City Commissioner
Will Prible
Anna Marie Rosen

Franklin County Jailer

Jake Banta (D)

State Senate

District 7
Calen Studler (R)
Linda Thompson (R)

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THE FRANKFORT PRAYER INITIATIVE

The first Monday of May will begin our ecumenical prayer service, starting promptly at 7 P.M. and finishing a few minutes after 8 P.M. Everyone who believes that prayer changes things is invited to attend,

MONDAY	HOST CHURCH
May 4	Forks of Elkhorn Baptist (Because of Virus, please pray from home.)
June 1	Elevate Church (formerly First Assembly)
July 6	New Harvest Assembly (U.S. 127, South)
August 3	The Point (formerly Thornhill Baptist)
September 7	Crestwood Baptist
October 5	Buck Run Baptist
November 2	Capital City Christian (the day before Election)

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