

Food Pantry LAX



Summer 2025

Forty Years of Service

Food Pantry LAX celebrates its 40th birthday this year! The pantry was founded in 1985 by a group of clergy members in Westchester and Ladera Heights.

In its four decades, the pantry has gone through many changes. After losing its lease at the location where CarMax is now, the pantry operated out of churches in Westchester. Money was tight and the pantry board even considered shutting down in the early 2000s. But the pantry was saved by a bequest in the will of a woman named Wilma Matz, for whom our volunteer-of-the-year award is named (see Page 3). The pantry was then able to rent its current facility in Inglewood.

We are now helping to feed around 500 people a week. Customers receive enough food to last about two days for everyone in their family. Besides non-perishable items like spaghetti, rice, tuna and

canned vegetables, the pantry offers each customer a bag of fresh fruits and vegetables.

For our homeless clients we offer a bag containing items that require no cooking or refrigeration. We also offer baby food, baby formula, toiletries, feminine pads, diapers and pet food.

funds are also used to purchase supplemental food.

Still, challenges loom. Last year the pantry ran a huge deficit as it gave out a record amount of food. Cutbacks in federal programs under the new administration in Washington threaten to decrease the pantry's supply of food while also



Customers wait in line for food Tuesday and Friday mornings.

Each morning that we are open, pantry volunteers fan out to collect food from restaurants, bakeries and supermarkets—food that is still edible but which the stores have replaced with fresher items. (See the donor list on page 4). Fresh bread and bagels, fruits and salads, and even sushi are donated; pantry

increasing demand for our assistance as people lose health insurance or food stamps.

This means the pantry will have to rely even more on the good will of the community. There are many ways to help:

Churches, synagogues and mosques can place food

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collection boxes in a prominent location.

Businesses, civic organizations and schools can organize food drives. These can be especially helpful in the spring, summer and early fall, when holiday season donations have dried up and our shelves are emptier.

Monetary donations can be made by check or through our website. The pantry is run entirely by volunteers, so there are no salaries. Almost all the money we spend goes to food, rent and utilities. We spend no money on expensive advertising, professional fund-raisers or gala dinners.

Our impact over the last forty years can best be measured in the dedication of our volunteers and the faces of our customers, which often light up when they receive their food. This would not be possible without the support we receive from the congregations in Westchester and from other organizations and individuals

throughout the Westside. Come visit. Check out our website at foodpantrylax.org.

Hopefully, Food Pantry LAX can continue to help our neighbors in need for another 40 years. 🍅

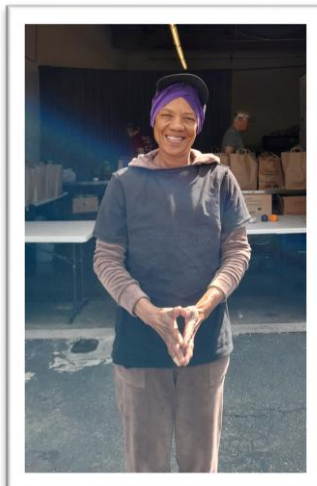
In 2024, Food Pantry LAX gave out 264,000 pounds of food, a 20% increase over the previous year.

Customer Profiles:

Sheryl

Sheryl has been coming to Food Pantry LAX for over 20 years, ever since she suffered a brain aneurysm. Multiple surgeries on her brain left her unable to continue working; she had been a Certified Public Accountant.

Sheryl says the food she receives from the pantry helps her make ends meet, since her disability checks are barely covering her housing payment. In spite of these difficulties, Sheryl always has a smile and a positive attitude when she arrives.



Roni



Roni, originally from Honduras, collects bottles and cans weekly in various neighborhoods, recycling them for cash. He also does landscaping work for a long-time client.

Living with Roni and his wife are two adult children and several grandchildren, so the extra groceries help out.

Roni's son has diabetes and can't always work, so even though Roni himself has retired from his machine operator job, he wants to continue providing for his family.

Volunteers of the Year:

Kelly Zimmerman and Jane Pavlina

Having raised four children with her husband, George, and retired from teaching math at Harbor College, Jane Pavlina wanted to volunteer. She had heard of Food Pantry LAX through her church, St. Jerome. She showed up 12 years ago, and soon found her niche.

Food Pantry LAX offers a bag of ready-to-eat (RTE) items to clients who are either unhoused or who have no cooking facilities. These single-serving food items do not require cooking. Jane noticed that crackers, bread and chips as the main RTE items weren't really very nutritious. So when she sees donated items come in that would boost nutrition for RTE clients—like protein drinks—Jane makes sure those get in the bags. Meat sticks or pop-top cans of tuna, granola bars, small cartons of milk, peanut butter and fresh fruit round out the RTE items.

Jane has a heart for helping people, and uses logic to do her work quickly and efficiently. She tries to put something sweet in the bag for each

customer, "to make them happy," she says.

Jane also has energy to sew quilts for various charitable causes. One project involved making specially-sized quilts to fit gurneys on which wounded military personnel were being evacuated. Quilts for foster children, and lap quilts for WWII vets are some of the other projects she has participated in through the South Bay Quilters Guild.

While Jane works on Tuesdays at Food Pantry LAX, her Friday counterpart is no less busy. Kelly Zimmerman, similarly retired, heard about the food pantry from a friend in her book club. She loves helping out wherever she is needed, primarily prepping the Ready-to-Eat bags but also registering people, unloading the pallets

and occasionally making regular (for cooking) bags. Her engineering background makes her curious, so she is always trying to learn new things and figure out more efficient ways of working. She enjoys the camaraderie of the volunteers and looks forward to Fridays.

In her spare time, Kelly plays canasta (thanks to Dorothy Nino, who formerly managed the Food Pantry), and makes jewelry. She also enjoys reading, and has been involved with her book club for over 25 years.

Both women agree that bringing orderliness and logic to their tasks has made the RTE bag prep process much more efficient, and better nourishes Food Pantry LAX clients. Thank you, Kelly and Jane, for your dedication and hard work. 🍅



Kelly Zimmerman, left, and Jane Pavlina, center, receive the Wilma S. Matz Volunteer of the Year award, presented by Pantry Vice President Cathy Heppell.

New Donor: Michelson Found Animals

Customers of Food Pantry LAX love their pets, and often ask for dog or cat food when coming to pick up groceries. While the Pantry would sometimes have kibble to give out, it was sporadic. Thanks to a grant from Michelson Found Animals, Food Pantry LAX is pleased to more consistently be able to offer dog and cat



food. This partnership benefits both Pantry customers and their pets: it is known that besides providing companionship, petting your dog or cat



can even lower your blood pressure and reduce stress. Learn more about this donor at FoundAnimals.org. 🍅



Thank you to Inglewood Councilman Alex Padilla (right) who sponsored a wonderful food drive in June to benefit the pantry. Pantry President Andy Pollack is on the left.

Food Pantry LAX

Food Distribution:

Tuesdays and Fridays
9:30am – 12 noon

355 East Beach Avenue
Inglewood, CA 90302

Phone: 310-677-5597

Mailing address:

6201 W. 87th St.
#320, PMB 741
Los Angeles, CA 90045

Email:

FoodpantryLAX@gmail.com

Website: FoodpantryLAX.org

EIN Number: 95-4036782

Thank you to our valued food contributors!

Westside Food Bank ♦ Vons, Centinela Avenue ♦ Bristol Farms, Manhattan Beach
Cadaro Bakery ♦ Food Forward / Social Justice Learning Institute ♦ Gjusta Bakery
Holy Nativity Episcopal Church community garden ♦ Togo's, Westchester
Noah's NY Bagels, Marina del Rey ♦ Westchester Farmer's Market ♦ Food Cycle LA
Manhattan Bread & Bagel, Manhattan Beach ♦ Michelson Found Animals