

Jewish agency's food drive helps people in need

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JEWISH JOURNAL | FEB 25, 2022 AT 2:54 PM



From left, Rebecca Weinstock and Lourdes Fiegler, cultural community liaison for the Dorit & Ben J. Genet Cupboard, collect groceries for Goodman JFS' food drive that are intended to help Broward County residents suffering from food insecurity offset the rising cost of groceries. (Courtesy)

With high inflation rates and supply chain issues causing increases in grocery store purchases, Goodman Jewish Family Services of Broward County hosted a drive-thru food drive in Hollywood.

For the food drive, supporters of the Dorit & Ben J. Genet Cupboard of Goodman Jewish Family Services of Broward County collected 500 pounds of non-perishable food items such as cereal, tuna fish, vegetable oil, sugar, condiments, toilet paper and paper towels. This is part of the agency's efforts to help Broward County residents suffering from food insecurity offset the rising cost of groceries.

Ross Adel, operations director of the Cupboard – a food program which serves 700 families, 150 of which are Holocaust survivors – said the agency is beyond grateful for the drive's turnout.



“We are surrounded by an amazing group of donors and volunteers who always step up and help the Cupboard fulfill our mission of eliminating hunger in Broward County’s Jewish community,” Adel continued.

Adel said, regarding his thoughts on the community’s generosity, “The community is the reason the Cupboard is able to feed so many families today.”

“We could not do what we do without their tremendous support,” he continued.

Adel also enjoyed seeing families come out for the food drive.

“It’s always a highlight to see generations of families come out together to support those in need,” he said. “It means they are passing down the importance and tradition of giving back to the community in which they live.”

Adel said the items collected will be included in the agency’s hurricane readiness bags and distributed to its 600+ families throughout the entire month of May. He noted that recipients are clients of the Cupboard, and explained what the groceries mean for them.

“Having to ask for help is extremely difficult,” he said. “Many of our families worry about so much more than just food. Anytime the Cupboard has the opportunity to help families with extras such as providing hurricane readiness bags or holiday gifts to help alleviate the extra stress, we are happy to do so. We hope we can ease their minds, even if for a short time, so that there is one less thing to worry about in that moment.”



Generations of families come out together to support people in need for Goodman JFS' food drive. (Courtesy)



Talia Dennis-Frieman, a supporter of the Cupboard and host of the drive-thru food drive, said, “I grew up in a home where charity was very important.”

“We were raised to always give back,” Dennis-Frieman continued. “I want to teach this to my daughters and instill in them what my parents instilled in us.”

Dennis-Frieman added, “My mother had a magic bench in front of the house, where she constantly collected food items for people in need.”

“I would like to carry on the tradition,” she noted. “This [food drive] was a huge success, and my family was so grateful to be a part of it.”

Broward County residents suffering from food insecurity can call the agency at 954-370-2140, or visit jfsbroward.org.

The Cupboard will partner with Farm Share and Temple Beth Am in Margate to host a drive-thru food distribution from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on March 18. The event takes place at Temple Beth Am, 7205 Royal Palm Blvd. in Margate, and food will be distributed at a first come, first served basis. Volunteers will place food in trunks. Masks are required. Call 954-530-7555 for more information.

At Jewish Family Services of South Florida in Miami-Dade County, Miriam Singer, the agency’s president and chief executive officer, said its Kosher Food Bank “is dedicated to serving as our community’s response to deepening food insecurity.”

“We work closely with our treasured partners at Greater Miami Jewish Federation to source monthly food drives so we may provide essential nutritional support to members of the community experiencing hardship as a result of COVID-19 impacts,” Singer continued. “Additionally, due to a generous grant from Florida Blue, we now have the ability to provide additional healthy and nutritious food items, including fresh fish, to underserved individuals and families.”

Singer added, “We are committed to maintaining these efforts as long as there is a demand and need for food support. It is our privilege to serve as our community’s strong and resilient safety-net.”

Visit jcsfl.org for more information on the agency and its Kosher Food Bank.

Ruth & Norman Rales Jewish Family Services is offering COVID-19 financial assistance for people residing in Boca Raton, Delray Beach and Highland Beach. For information on the agency and its Jacobson Family Food Pantry, visit ralesjfs.org or call 561-274-1940.