Grant provides boost for Sister BJ's Pantry

Sister BJ's Pantry keeps growing. Growing in services. Growing in numbers served.

Growing in need for more space, too.

Thanks to the Order of Malta, plans to expand have gained some clarity, with a $30,000 grant dedicated to architectural and engineering design for a proposed new property for the Pantry.

Sister Barbara Joseph Foley, a Carmelite nun, opened her pantry for the homeless 18 years ago. The small building in the 800 block of NW 4 Street, near downtown Oklahoma City features a large outdoor garden and picnic area where local homeless and others in need can receive a meal and peaceful respite.

Sister Barbara recently authorized a letter of intent to purchase a new site near downtown Oklahoma City, just south of Oklahoma City Boulevard. The grant will support the master planning, architectural and engineering costs for the new facility.

"Beginning with the COVID-19 pandemic and continuing with the difficult economic conditions in 2024, the homeless population of Oklahoma City has increased dramatically," Sister Barbara said. "The proposed pantry will allow us to expand our ministry, and better serve the growing needs of those most affected."

What began as a simple ministry to feed the hungry has grown to include additional services including a food bank, clothing room, foot clinic, eye clinic and a mobile pantry bus. Even after renting an additional 2,400 square foot building next door to house the clothing room, the increasing needs of Oklahoma City's homeless has Sister BJ's Pantry serving more people than ever and they've quickly outgrown the existing property.

The gift comes from the Order of Malta's Federal Association Grants Program, which provides annual financial and material support to health clinics, soup kitchens and food distribution centers, home repair, and other relief programs in the United States and overseas through the generosity of its members.

For Peter de Keratry, hospitaller of the Order of Malta's Oklahoma City Region, this was the fruit of a continuing partnership in service with Sister BJ's Pantry.

"Offering a hot meal to the homeless each Sunday morning at Sister BJ's is a tangible way to live out our promise as knights and dames of the Order to serve the poor and sick, " de Keratry said. "It's a meaningful and popular project with our members so we couldn't be more pleased to offer this gift to Sister Barbara on behalf of the wider membership of the Order of Malta."

To learn more, follow Sister BJ's Pantry on Facebook or visit srbjpantry.com.

Sr. BJ's Pantry

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

Each day add an item to a box for the homeless at Sr. BJ's Pantry.
Drop off will be Dec. 31st from 8-10 am at the Pantry or
Saturday mornings from 7-9:30 am.

Dec. 1- Can of Fruit
Dec. 2- Peanut Butter
Dec. 3- Instant Potatoes
Dec. 4- Macaroni and Cheese
Dec. 5- Canned Chicken
Dec. 6- SPAM
Dec. 7- Canned Tuna
Dec. 8- Tomato Sauce
Dec. 9- Pork & Beans
Dec. 10- Peanut Butter Crackers
Dec. 11- Hamburger Helper
Dec. 12- Package of Dry Beans
Dec. 13- Pasta-15
Dec. 14- Spaghetti Sauce– 15oz
Dec. 15- Progresso Soup
Dec. 16- Can of Corn
Dec. 17- Cake Mix
Dec. 18- Jelly
Dec. 19-Can of Chill
Dec. 20- Lunch Size Chips
Dec. 21-Cookie Packages
Dec. 22-Granola Bars
Dec. 23- Saltines
Dec. 24- Fruit Cups

Thank you for your continued support and prayers!

Sister Barbara Joseph
819 NW 4th St., Oklahoma City, OK 73106
srbjpantry.org

Photo provided.