

Local Cleveland Food Pantry Expands Reach with Meijer *Simply Give* program

Year-round, the Meijer *Simply Give* hunger relief program supports more than 500 local food pantries in our local communities. From unexpected disasters to seasonal giving, we remain committed to enriching lives in the communities we serve and partnering with some incredible organizations who are making a difference every day.

This summer, when a string of tornadoes left Cleveland-area communities in crisis, the Olivet Institutional Baptist Church swiftly organized an emergency food distribution that supported more than 80 families in need.

Because of the Meijer *Simply Give* program, the team was able to purchase ready-to-eat items like bread, fruit, pouches of tuna and chicken, crackers, trail mix, water, and juice to deliver critical aid to families who were without power.

“This partnership with Meijer allowed us to respond immediately,” said Stephen Williams, outreach coordinator for the Olivet Housing and Community Development Corp., the nonprofit arm of Olivet Institutional Baptist Church. “The support we received from Meijer meant we could buy the essentials right away, helping families get through those tough days.”

Beyond emergency relief, Olivet has also ramped up its holiday support for the Fairfax community, a neighborhood on the East Side of Cleveland.

Later this month, the organization’s food pantry plans to provide more than 150 families with a complete Thanksgiving meal, including turkeys, stuffing, cranberry sauce and yams.

“This year has been challenging for many, and we want families to enjoy a holiday meal without the stress of rising food costs,” said Williams.

Olivet’s food pantry serves the Fairfax neighborhood and surrounding communities on the third Saturday of each month, distributing boxes filled with staple foods that provide families with at least three days’ worth of meals.

Thanks to a partnership with the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, the pantry also has frozen meat, dairy products, toiletries, as well as 6,000 pounds of fresh produce from April to November.

“Through this partnership, we’re able to provide items like peanut butter, jelly, canned fruit and vegetables, and pasta for more families while staying within budget,” Williams explained. “The Meijer *Simply Give* program and support from the Meijer Fairfax Market have been invaluable in helping us meet the growing needs in our area.”

Olivet’s efforts reflect its long-standing mission of community service, an ethos championed by Pastor Dr. Jawanza Karriem Colvin.

“Our church has served Fairfax for 93 years, following the institutional Baptist tradition of combining faith with action,” Colvin said. “Even with new grocery stores in the area, many residents still struggle to afford food. That’s why our partnerships with Meijer and the Greater Cleveland Food Bank are so essential in meeting rising food insecurity needs, especially during the holiday season.”

In the past year, Olivet has provided food and essential supplies to more than 1,000 families, which equates to more than 2,500 people. “Seeing the gratitude on people’s faces and hearing their words of appreciation, particularly during holiday distributions, reminds us how much these efforts mean,” Williams shared. “If you support the Meijer *Simply Give* program, know that your contribution is directly helping families in need.”

Additional assets available online: [Photos](#) ⁽³⁾

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