

After experiencing kindness of community, woman gives back

New Path pantry is served by Shared Harvest Foodbank.

By Richard O Jones
Shared Harvest Foodbank

As a single mother, Traci knows well the struggle to keep a family fed, even a cozy family of two.

And having experienced the kindness of the community, she is glad to give back by volunteering her time to The New Path, a ministry of the Ginghamburg United Methodist Church.

The New Path offers a choice food pantry and other services for the needy in Miami County, one of five counties served by Shared Harvest Foodbank.

Her daughter was only seven years old when Traci and the girl's father separated in 2008. It was tough to make ends meet while earning a living making sandwiches for Subway, so Traci turned to our food pantries when food was scarce at home.

"I only use it when I need it," she said, "and I've been good lately, balancing my money and getting other help. I don't want to take it from somebody else just because I can get it.

"I'm grateful for all the places that are out there for people. If it wasn't for them, people would be going with-



Traci had a hard time making ends meet while working for a fast-food restaurant, so she turned to the Shared Harvest Foodbank network of food pantries when food was scarce at home.

CONTRIBUTED
BY RICHARD O
JONES

HOW TO DONATE

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MAIL your contribution to: Shared Harvest Foodbank/CFR, 5901 Dixie Highway, Fairfield, OH 45014

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out."

According to Tina Osso, executive director of Shared Harvest Foodbank, it's not at all unusual for people who have been served by food

pantries to come back and volunteer their time as a way to repay.

"We have had many people in the warehouse who were once clients," she said. "Some of our most enthusiastic donors are people who have been helped through a hard time by getting food from one of the pantries we serve."

Traci first came to The New Path, however, in 2010 because of its CAR Ministry, designed to help people with transportation needs.

"You had to go to so many classes and had to do some community service, helping in the office or in the food pantry," Traci said.

"So I got my hours in and

was able to get a car. It was a little Saturn. I had it four years. I loved it."

Earlier this year, unable to work because knee issues for which she is now recovering from surgery, she decided to give back to The New Path by volunteering in the office. She helps with data entry and other chores, and enjoyed helping gather door prizes for a fundraiser.

"I'm grateful to be here and I'm thankful this place is here," Traci said, "not just for me when I need it, but for other people. I'm glad I've had the opportunity to be there and work for them in the office and help me recover."