

HAMILTON

Pantry volunteer believes in kindness to one and all

Serve City relies on people like Yvonne Joe to keep going.

By Richard O Jones
Contributing Writer

HAMILTON — A couple of times a week, usually a Tuesday or Thursday, you'll find Yvonne Joe chatting it up with the people coming into the Serve City Pantry on East Avenue in Hamilton.

Sometimes she'll be in the clothing section, helping someone pick out a new outfit, a mother looking to find something warm for her baby to wear or a man just getting out of the Butler County Jail who owns nothing but what he's wearing.

Whoever it is, Joe greets them with a warm smile, and when she's working in the food section, maybe some good advice about making the most out of what they're able to get from the pantry. She's an excellent cook, and loves to share tips and techniques.

"Kindness means just doing things with compassion and helping people," Joe said. "Wherever they are, just saying hello is a kind thing to do and make someone's day. I believe in blessing people as I come in contact with them."

The Serve City Pantry provides food and clothing for up to 700 people a month, according to pantry director Glenna Carroll. About half of the food they serve comes from local retail res-



For the past two years, Hamilton resident Yvonne Joe has been volunteering two days a week at the Serve City Pantry on East Avenue. CONTRIBUTED BY RICHARD O. JONES

cue and half from Shared Harvest Foodbank. Through its network of food pantries and soup kitchens in five Southwestern Ohio counties, Shared Harvest Foodbank provided nearly seven million meals in 2017.

"If we weren't here, probably a lot of them would go hungry because a lot of them have no income at all," Carroll said. "Some of them are homeless, and a lot of them are elderly. They don't get enough money to pay for their living expenses, their food, and their medicines, their rent and stuff like that." "Some get food stamps but

it's not enough to cover all their children they happen to have in the household. So we kind of fill in the gaps and we give them a list of the other pantries they can go to also," she said.

Serve City began as an outreach of the New Life Vineyard Church in the 1990s and took up residence on East Avenue in 2000, said Linda Kimble, who has been the executive director since then.

There is also a 52-bed shelter on the premises, and Serve City operates two apartment buildings with low rents to help people get

HOW TO HELP

To donate to the annual Community Food Relief Campaign, visit tinyurl.com/RELIEF2018 or mail your donation using the special envelope inside today's Journal-News.

back on their feet.

With a staff of seven, Serve City relies heavily on volunteers like Joe.

"Kindness is how we should interact with each other," Joe said.