

A Little Free Food Pantry in Glencarlyn?

Food insecurity affects at least 7.1% of residents in Arlington. This means that over 16,000 of our neighbors are uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food for all members of their households at some point during a year.

Surprisingly, the “Arlington County Food Security Strategic Plan” (page 4) reports “The highest rates of food insecurity are found in the Glencarlyn neighborhood at 14.6% and Buckingham/Ashton Heights neighborhoods at 14.5%”.

Glencarlyn residents have shown their concern by generously contributing thousands of pounds of food to Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC) over the past few years. With the participation of the community, St. John’s Church has heavily supported AFAC through food and monetary donations. Additionally, volunteer parishioners participate monthly in AFAC’s food bagging program.

Little Free Food Pantries are an important resource for those who use them. A very successful one was established on the Central Library grounds in 2020 that had considerable community participation, ensuring the pantry was always stocked with nonperishable food. They made sure that the right types of food were stocked, and generally managed the operation of the pantry.

Unfortunately, the library closed that Little Free Food Pantry in 2023. The original organizers are seeking an alternate location and have asked St. John’s if they would host it.

The food pantry is a 4 X 4 foot box about 18 inches deep that sits atop four posts and is stocked with only non-perishable foods. Individuals in need of some food items can stop by at any time. The signage says “Take what you need, give what you can.”

St. John’s is seriously considering placing the Little Free Food Pantry (LFFP) on their grounds. It was heavily used by those who needed it at its last location, and it could be a great asset to our community. A meeting will be held Tuesday, March 12 at 7 pm at St. John’s where residents of Glencarlyn, individuals who supported the LFFP while it operated at the library, and representatives of the neighborhood schools can discuss the project. Those who have supported the LFFP in the past will be available to answer questions. St. John’s wants to have full community input before making a final decision.

St. John’s welcomes any thoughts that anyone would like to share. You can send an email to rector@stjohnsarlingtonva.org.

St. John’s is located at 415 S. Lexington Street, Arlington VA 22204 stjohnsarlingtonva.org

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