

Emergency Rural Health Care Grant

NEW JERSEY

‘The Greatest Thing in the World’: Senior Praises USDA Rural Development Funded Food Pantry

Originally from Pennsylvania, she’s a self-proclaimed “Jersey girl” who says she can’t help herself when it comes to helping others.

“I like to tell the people around here what they should and shouldn’t be doing,” laughed Joan Lombardi, a resident at Kapp Senior Residences in Flemington, New Jersey. “Most people probably think I get involved in everything, but I love helping. I’m just that person.”

Five years ago, before moving to Kapp, Lombardi kept watch over the administrative tasks within her living community. These days, her calling has led her to food.

Thanks to a \$121,600 grant from USDA Rural Development, the Flemington Area Food Pantry Annex was able to purchase and install a walk-in freezer, a pallet mover, and a generator. The investment created much-needed space for desired items and improved logistics for food deliveries that serve over 80 senior citizens in the Flemington and Hampton communities of New Jersey.

“The pantry here is the greatest thing in the world,” Lombardi said.

Her involvement began when she noticed the pantry deliveries occasionally rolling up to the complex on small, wheeled carts. The process seemed time consuming, so she offered up larger carts homed at the residence. Ever since, she’s adopted the part time, volunteer position of food organizer.

“Helping the food bank is great because I was able to organize the process and make it easier on the residents,” she said, explaining that each resident can request and have deliveries tailored to their tastebuds. Following the unpacking process, individual orders are assembled and delivered throughout the facility. For some, that’s the highlight of their month.

“Seniors sometimes feel left out, we really do,” said fellow resident Karen Flar. “But the Pantry goes out of their way for us. When we get the fresh produce, I go crazy. I feel so blessed to be able to eat healthy.”

Flar hasn’t had the easiest path in life, but you wouldn’t know it by her optimistic demeanor. She’s a widowed cancer survivor living solely off social security who, with a smile, says she’s “Nearly eight years clean” of cancer.

“It’s like you’re going to the store and able to pick exactly what you need -- it really helps everyone,” said Lombardi. “It’s wonderful the USDA was willing to spend and give this money to helping seniors.”

USDA Rural Development State Director Jane Asselta said “With this financial support, we’re able to assist the Flemington Food Pantry meet their mission of providing food and personal care items to those in Hunterdon County who are food insecure. The Rural Development team here in New Jersey is proud to invest in and support our rural residents, making our collaborative efforts more efficient, more effective and allowing us to serve more people.”

USDA Rural Development offers programs to help invest in essential community facilities such as food pantries, first-responders, hospitals, and libraries through the [Community Facilities Programs](#). For more information, contact the USDA Rural Development office in Mt Laurel, New Jersey at (856) 787-7751.



Joan Lombardi, a senior and volunteer at Herman A. Kapp Senior Residences talks about the impact of recent funding to Flemington Area Food Pantry Annex

Obligation Amount: Emergency Rural Health Care Grant of \$121,600

Date of Obligation: June 9, 2022

Congressional District: Representative Malinowski (NJ 07); Senators Menendez and Booker