

2017 Overview of Action Ministries, Inc. January 1, 2018

In 1994, Tom Dorman was asked by the mayor of Ryland Heights to distribute government commodities to local residents, making use of space at Ryland Heights Elementary School. From that very modest beginning, Action Ministries is now a 501(c)3 non-profit, faith-based food pantry with a significant presence in northern Kentucky.

Our programs include:

- Distribution of food daily through our location in Latonia, Kentucky
- Distribution of government commodities
- A weekend backpack program (*Food For Thought*) for the Kenton County District
- Sharing products with about 50 other agencies, churches and schools
- Volunteer opportunities monthly for well over 150 people and numerous community groups

All of Action Ministries' work is accomplished by a team of about 100 volunteers. No one is compensated in any way. Our mission is "to share the love of Jesus Christ by providing groceries, hope and encouragement to low-income families" and, while we require no religious test for our help, we hope that our motivation is clear to those we serve.

Core Program

Our warehouse/office in Latonia is open Monday through Friday from 9-noon and two Monday evenings each month. In 2017, we helped families 11,562 times (100.3% of 2016). We try to limit our service area to Kenton County, south of Covington, but we will serve anyone who comes in, at least the first time, and then refer him to agencies closer to his home. Because of monetary donations by 20 local churches, and 200 individuals and groups, government commodities, and product donations from area businesses we are able to give over 100 pounds of groceries to each family we serve. Our bags typically include some combination of meats, produce, dairy products, bread, pizza, canned fruit and vegetables, packaged goods, paper goods, cereal, fruit juice, and household/personal care items. Very recently, through the Safety Net Alliance and the Freestore/Foodbank, partnerships have been made with Kentucky Sam's Club, Kroger, Meijer's and Wal-Mart stores on behalf of all the area agencies. These stores are now providing us with a significant amount of perishables – especially meat, bread and produce. In 2015, we began receiving significant donations from Amazon which are proving to be a great addition to the canned goods we purchase. With careful management, the food we provide could feed a family of three for a week.

Government Commodities

We distribute the government commodities provided by NKADD to all our qualifying clients. For example, a family of 4 making less than \$2665 a month will qualify. Although items in the commodities will vary from month to month, they are included in the list above.

Food For Thought

Our weekend backpack program, *Food For Thought*, is offered to the Family Resource Centers in the Kenton County School District. Some children within our community rely on their free and reduced lunches at school as their main source of nourishment for the day. On the weekends, for a variety of reasons, they do not have a reliable food source in their homes. The program gives them food on Friday afternoon to feed them over the weekend. We are purchasing the Power Pack Bags from the Cincinnati Freestore/Foodbank and distributing them to the schools. Financial support for *Food For Thought* comes from several individuals and from many local businesses and foundations. For the 2017/18 school year, we are making 230 bags available each week. Following are just a few of the notes we've received from the Family Resource Coordinators:

- *I had a grandparent call and thank me for the FFT program right before Thanksgiving. Background: Grandparents are raising 2 grandchildren. The students receive food for Thought each week. Grandmother called to thank us. Grandma was recently diagnosed and is battling with cancer for the second time. The food the grandchildren receive is greatly helping the family due to the grandparents being on a fixed income and their added medical expenses. Thank you for all that you do. Action Ministries is such a blessing to all our schools.*
- *12 out of the 15 kids at our school who receive Food for Thought bags on a weekly basis are identified as McKinney Vento which is a federal law that protects children who are living in transitional situations. This might mean that their family is doubled up with a family member or friend, it might mean that another person, grandparent, relative or friend may have temporary custody of them or it might mean that they are living in a hotel or car. I am so thankful that we have the Food for Thought bags to give to our children who have the greatest need which is food. Thank you, Action Ministries, for supplying our schools with this wonderful gift!*
- *We have quite a few families where kids have been placed with grandparents or other relatives. When we get a new family in this situation I try to reach out to the caregiver to offer support. These folks are often feeling very overwhelmed and unsure where to go for assistance. I'm glad to be able to offer Food for Thought bags to them. I think it shows them right at the start that our school cares about their family and will help where we can. It's also an opportunity for me to make a positive connection with the students when they come to my office to get their bags on Fridays. I think it helps them feel connected to their new school pretty quickly and gives me an opportunity to chat with them and try to assess other needs. I am so thankful that Action Ministries continues to provide Food for Thought bags to my students!*
- *Several weeks ago, a mom came to me crying and on the verge of a nervous breakdown. She suffers from severe anxiety and depression, so everything is difficult for her right now. She had been trying to get food stamps for her family, but was missing documentation, the caseworker had changed, social services was involved etc. etc. I informed her of our FFT program and that we could send food bags home with her 2 girls every week. Mom was so relieved she gave me a big hug (even the social worker commented on what a help it was to them). Now, every Friday, the girls see me in the hallway and ask, "Are you going to bring my bags to me today?" So not only were the FFT bags able to help this family tremendously, I now have a great relationship with the girls and the mom and they know they can come to me whenever needed. Thank you so much for the continued support of the FFT bags! We have 61% of our children on free/reduced lunches, so it DEFINITELY comes in handy for our needy families!*

Sharing

Because we are often blessed with very large quantities of a donated product, we have a network of agencies in our area that we can share, and sometimes trade, with. Last year, we shared with 50 other agencies, churches and schools.

Volunteering

Volunteers are absolutely essential to our operation. As the program has grown, the demand on our volunteers has increased significantly and more people are constantly needed, some with specific skills. Amazingly, the Spirit has moved and someone has come forward each time a need has arisen. We have a core of about 100 people who volunteer with us each month, working in the warehouse, driving the truck, interviewing and serving the clients, managing the operation, taking care of necessary building repairs and maintenance and handling the business affairs of the Mission. Church groups, home-schoolers, school groups, local courts, and civic/business groups often use Action Ministries as a vehicle for their volunteer and community service opportunities. Lately, parents have begun bringing their younger children to work with them in the evening so that they can begin to learn the value of volunteering. The Mission has also become an outlet for some of our older people who want to remain connected and provide useful and meaningful service. We welcome everyone who wants to serve with us and try very hard to find a place to use their talents.

Our Budget

Our budget for 2017 was \$111,184. Approximately 55% of the budget was earmarked for food for both our general and *Food For Thought* programs. The balance was for expenses necessary to operate the facility. **No money is being spent for salaries.** During the year, one of our long-time, faithful donors passed away and very unexpectedly left us money to purchase a new truck to replace the old one and make it possible for us to make some necessary upgrades and repairs to the facility.