

For Immediate Release
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Irene's Wrath Wipes Out Salem Food Pantry Community Volunteers Rebuild at New Location

Salem, NY – Following the damage sustained during Tropical Storm Irene, the Salem Food Pantry's executive director and Salem Town Supervisor, Seth Pitts surveyed damage mounting into the thousands of dollars. With all refrigeration and freezer storage compromised or ruined through the flooding of the food pantry's long-time home at the United Presbyterian Church on West Broadway in Salem, in addition to dry goods drenched in standing water, clean up of the space was first on the list.

Volunteers worked to discard the destroyed food items, and sorted canned goods that could be salvaged on Thursday, September 1st. Many people from Salem, Shushan, Hebron, Argyle, and Easton assisted those in need following extensive damage throughout Salem, and volunteer fire departments from Salem and surrounding communities pumped basements and helped people return to their homes. On Friday, volunteers moved shelving units and food items to the food pantry's current and temporary location at Burton Hall, part of St. Paul's Episcopal Church at 32 East Broadway in Salem, while Congressman Gibson visited the food pantry and various sites hit by flooding with Supervisor Pitts and Salem Mayor Anne Dunigan.

Burton Hall has been vacant for a few years, and it is hoped that the food pantry will be able to raise enough money to heat the building through the cold weather months, making it a permanent location. While Burton Hall sustained flooding in it's basement (and cleanup efforts are ongoing), the food pantry is being housed on the first floor.

Throughout Friday, generous food donations arrived from the Wilton and Argyle food pantries, while a chest freezer was purchased and donated by a community member, and Terry and Tom Thibeault of Adirondack Appliances from Saratoga Springs, donated and delivered two side-by-side refrigerators Friday evening.

A fundraiser will take place at Burton Hall on Saturday, September 17th from 5-7 pm with a musical performance by Bob Warren. To assist with the clean up efforts or help with the fundraising dinner, please call Annette Nielsen at 518.854.9777 or Seth Pitts at 518.854.3277. Tickets (\$10 suggested donation) are available at Salem Hardware starting Tuesday, September 6, 2011. Monetary donations can be sent to 'Salem Food Pantry', 83 Pitts Hill Lane, Salem, NY 12865.

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