

Open Pantry Community Services

The Amherst Unitarian Universalist Newsletter

November 2008.

The Social Justice Spotlight is an opinion column written by individual Social Justice Committee members. This month's Spotlight comes to us from Kevin Noonan.

Recently I was asked to write about how the recent financial crisis was affecting organizations like the one which I am privileged to direct in Springfield, Open Pantry Community Services, Inc.

So here is a snapshot of where we stand as of 15 October 2008.

The stock market continues to flat line despite an allocation of over \$700 billion, a cut in the interest rate and a plan to infuse capital into banks. All of this bodes poorly for the poorest members of our society.

Today I traveled to Boston to see if Open Pantry, which last year provided enough non-perishable groceries to feed over 27,500 individuals (nearly half of them children) and over 100,000 community meals (seven days per week), in addition to many other services, would be able to survive the coming year.

Unfortunately I learned an allocation that would have provided a long-overdue increase to Open Pantry for its feeding programs (which was approved earlier this year by the legislature, then vetoed by the Governor and subsequently restored by the legislature), has once again been cut, this time by 50%, by the Governor, using his 9C authority.

We are asking people to contact the Governor to ask him to reconsider this drastic cut. Please also call area legislators and urge them encourage Governor Patrick to be consistent with his promise to not balance the State budget on the backs of people who are poor and homeless.

For more information, please visit our web site: www.openpantry.org