

YOUR VIEW

City urged to support Osgood Food Pantry

To the Editor:

I am writing to urge the city to provide essential funding for the food pantry, located in Osgood Park. Many New Britain residents with low-paying jobs, as well as those unable to work, rely upon the pantry to provide healthy food for their children. Without the food pantry, children will be hungry and malnourished, as families are forced to choose between food and other essential expenses, such as rent, utilities or clothing.

The food pantry is a very cost-effective program. Much of the food is donated free to the pantry by local stores and by Foodshare,

while other food — to fill gaps in donations and maintain balanced nutrition — is purchased for only 17 cents per pound. Many volunteers provide free labor, but a small paid staff is essential to keep the pantry operating. HRA is requesting only \$10,000, to keep the pantry operating for one year, on its present schedule of one day per week. (Only a few years ago, the pantry was open three days per week.) Ten thousand dollars is a small fraction of the value of the food being distributed to New Britain families. Funding can be provided from federal CDBG funds, or else the city should find

an alternative source to fund this vital resource.

Mayor Stewart has repeatedly expressed support for the pantry, and posed for photographs delivering food. The Herald has provided valuable publicity. My wife and I are proud to be among those who have donated time and labor to the pantry. The city needs to back its good wishes with a small amount of essential funding.

We must not lose this vital community resource for lack of the small funding needed.

Ken Speyer,
Volunteer and Board Member,
HRA of New Britain