



**Marion County
Board of County Commissioners**

Office of Public Information

601 SE 25th Ave.
Ocala, FL 34471
Phone: 352-438-2300
Fax: 352-438-2309

Contact: Christy Jergens, Public Information Manager

Office: 352-438-2311 ▪ Cell: 352-789-2152 ▪ Email: christy.jergens@marioncountyfl.org

COUNTY KICKS OFF DRIVE TO “BRING THE HARVEST HOME”

Immediate Release

MARION COUNTY, Fla. (Oct. 4, 2011) – New faces have been visiting local food pantries since this summer, increasing requests for help with groceries by up to 44 percent. The spike coincides with a dwindling supply of donations, leaving area pantries in a dire spot and vulnerable to not being able to assist area residents who need help putting food on the table. To help combat this, the Marion County Board of County Commissioners is asking residents, organizations and businesses to donate food to area pantries through the county’s 21-day “Bring the Harvest Home” food drive.

County Commissioner Mike Amsden led the charge to host the drive after learning that community food pantries Brother’s Keeper, Interfaith Emergency Services and Salvation Army are facing nearly bare cupboards due to the sharp rise in need in the community.

“We are challenging local governments, the school system, area businesses, churches and individuals to organize efforts and contribute to the drive to fill the pantries of these agencies,” Amsden said. “We encourage those who can, to give what they can.”

From today until Tuesday, Oct. 25, residents who want to participate in the food drive can drop off their donations at any regularly-staffed Marion County Fire Rescue station or Public Library System branch. Staff will deliver donations collected at Marion County stations and libraries to Interfaith, where they will be shared equally with the other two food pantries.

The pantries are in most urgent need of:

- Dry goods/foods that complement dry goods (rice, pasta, pasta sauce, cereal, crackers, peanut butter and jelly).
- Canned meats (corned beef, corned beef hash, ham and tuna).
- Canned vegetables and fruit.
- Baby items (ranging from powdered formula and jarred food to diapers and lotion).

Toiletries, such as soap, shampoo, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste and toilet paper are also always needed.

For more information about Bring the Harvest Home, contact the Marion County Office of Public Information at 352-438-2300. For more information about local food pantries, contact Brother’s Keeper (352-622-3846), Interfaith (352-629-8868) or Salvation Army (352-732-8326).

###



“Meeting Needs by Exceeding Expectations”