

Food Pantry Helps During Tough Times

Sheryl is a single mother with a 10-year-old daughter named Lilly. Sheryl is often unable to buy groceries or pay her monthly bills.

“Right now, I can’t pay my phone bill. Tomorrow they will turn my phone off. It is not a good day.” She said. Sheryl grew up in Nutley and graduated from Essex County College. She holds a position as a teaching aide and had a second job during the summer. “People don’t understand. They don’t realize there are lots of folks who work very hard every day but are still unable to make ends meet,” She said.



NFSB pantry workers.

Sheryl was referred to the Nutley Family Service Bureau (NFSB) Food pantry in June 2017. As a teaching aide, summers without pay are hard. During the school year Lilly is eligible for the Free and Reduced School Lunch Program, not in the summer.

“I had no idea what to expect when we first applied to the pantry. I was worried I would recognize someone. I was also worried about how Lilly would feel,” Sheryl said. Those worries



quickly vanished. “The pantry is amazing. The volunteers are kind. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming, and I know the people who are there really care about us.”

Sheryl likes the fresh produce, meats and perishables at the pantry. The Thanksgiving Distribution and Christmas Gift Card Initiative make the holidays easier. Lilly’s favorite part is the We’ve Got Your Back event, a partnership with the Nutley Educational Foundation (NEF). “I need people like the people at NFSB,” Sheryl said.” They give us more than food. They give us support and access to services in the community. It makes some of the worry away. It makes our lives easier.”

Reprinted from the Star Ledger, November 24th, 2019