



Santa's Pantry
www.santaspantry.org

Start Paying It Forward Today!!

"Pay it Forward" was a book written in 2000 by Catherine Ryan Hyde and then made into a movie. To explain briefly, it tells a story of a social studies teacher that gives the students a extra credit assignment: **THINK OF AN IDEA FOR WORLD CHANGE, AND PUT IT INTO ACTION.** Trevor, the 12-year-old hero of "Pay It Forward," thinks of quite an idea. He describes it to his mother and teacher this way: "You see, I do something real good for three people. And then when they ask how they can pay it back, I say they have to Pay It Forward."

Since the book and movie, the "Pay it Forward" idea has taken off. Not just in the United States but nationwide! You can see stories of how people are helping each other on the Pay it Forward web site at: <http://www.payitforwardfoundation.org>. As you will see on their web site, ideas or projects do not have to be something big or extravagant.

Santa's Pantry started in January 2008 and we are proud to be a part of the Pay It Forward movement and encourage others to do the same. We started as just two people that saw a need in our community for hope and help and decided to do something. Our goals are to encourage the Pay It Forward movement and help others with ideas for projects to help someone else. We also want to raise donations for the food pantry at Guidance Ministries. Since January, we have helped people start their own Pay It Forward projects such as: holding food drives, collecting grocery bags for agencies that help the less fortunate, setting up donation cans for food pantries, planting a garden for the hungry in our community and raising money for crayons for Elkhart students. We hope we can be an encouragement to you and your group and help you get started with your own project as well. With everyone in our community "Paying it Forward", together we can make a difference.

*Santa's Pantry does encourage giving to Guidance Ministries, however, if you have your favorite organization that you prefer to help, that's great also. As long as people are "Paying it Forward" we are happy!



Suggested Ideas

Below are some suggestions but feel free to be creative as well.

1. **Food Drive** – Hold a food drive within your group. Agencies tend to always receive a lot of soup and beans so be sure to suggest such things as rice, peanut butter, spam, etc...
2. **Clothing Drive** – Hold a clothing drive within your group. Agencies are always in need of clothes, especially coats, hats and gloves for winter. *This project does not cost anyone money, only time.
3. **Adopt-A-Block for Santa** – Adopt a block or neighborhood for Santa (food drive). The first step is to select a neighborhood. Next print off a Adopt-a-block for Santa flier from the Santa's Pantry web site and make copies. Next either have the child write their FIRST name only or have an adult write the name of your group in the appropriate place of the flier. Next, fill in the date of which you will pick up the donations (be sure to give them a weeks notice). Then place the fliers in your neighbors paper boxes. Note: Do Not put anything in mailboxes, this is against the law. You can also hand out the fliers door to door and personally explain what you are doing. Then print off the Thank you note from the web site and make copies. On the day that you pick up the donations, please put a Thank You note in their paper box for their donation. Then call Santa's Pantry and have them pick up your donation to deliver it to Guidance Ministries.
4. **Garden for a Cause** – This is a great learning experience for the kids! Plant a garden. Plant all kinds of vegetables, even some that you may not like. When it is harvest time, pick everything and donate it to a food pantry. This teaches children how things grow as well as the importance of helping others.
5. **Toilet Paper Collection** – Yes this may sound funny but every agency that helps the less fortunate needs toilet paper. Often times people are desperate and will take it from the agency causing them more expense in having to buy more.
6. **Give Flowers** – Contact local nurseries and ask them if at the end of the season, you can have the flowers they are going to throw out to give to people in the nursing homes. A lot of the flowers are still in good shape to give someone. Or contact local groups such as the Dahlia society and ask if after their shows at the malls, you can have the flowers for the same thing. Or take flowers from your garden to nursing homes. This really brightens the day of people in homes. *This project does not cost anyone money, just time.
7. **Grocery Bag Collections** - Ask everyone in your group to save their grocery bags for two weeks. Every agency that helps with food and/or clothing is in need of bags. You will be surprised how many Bags you will collect just in two weeks time. *This project does not cost anyone money, just time.
8. **Newspaper Collection** – Ask everyone in your group to save their newspapers for a week or two. Area shelters and some vets are always grateful for newspapers.
9. **Busy Elves** – Find a elderly person that needs help around their house with yard work. Organize a work day for your group to help this person out. You may want to contact your church or ask friends if they know of anyone. This is a good project to do in the fall when the leaves start falling. *This project does not cost anyone anything, just time.
10. **Christmas "Gifts"** – This Christmas is going to be a hard one for many families with the slow economy. Do you or your group have a talent or "gift"? If someone in your group plays an instrument, offer free lessons. Or if your group is gifted with making crafts, make some and give them to people to give as presents. Be creative, everyone has a gift of some sort that they can share. If you do this project please notify Santa's Pantry. We will post it on our web site.

11. **Yard Sales** – Have your group collect things for a yard sale. Give the proceeds from your sale to your favorite organization or to an elderly person for prescriptions.
12. **Fun Fair** – Organize a fun fair. Make games for all ages of children. Maybe some of your friends Or someone in your group has a bounce house, or inflatable pool. Charge a low price per game so many children can play. Then give the proceeds to your favorite organization.
13. **Plates and Silverware** – Hold a collection for plastic silverware or napkins or cups. Organizations that help the less fortunate are always in need of these.
14. **Children helping B.A.B.E.S** - Hold a collection of gently used infant through 5T clothes for the B.A.B.E.S. group within the Women’s Care Clinic.
15. **Parents Night Out** – If your group is mainly adults or teens, offer a babysitting night during the holiday time. Offer a reasonable rate for an evening and then give the proceeds to your favorite organization.
16. **Santa Letters** – Santa’s Pantry is looking for people to help us write letters to children. We will have a P.O. box starting in October where children can send letters. We will meet at the main branch of the public library and a sample letter will be given. Volunteers do need to provide paper, envelopes and stamps.
17. **Clean up** - Have your group organize a clean up for your neighborhood. We suggest finding a street that is not very busy for younger children. Have the children wear gloves and pick up trash along the road
18. **Snowmen for Seniors** – Contact a local nursing home or assisted living center. Plan a day when your group can go and build snowmen so residents can see them from their windows.
19. **Share your time** - Many groups such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters and the Boys and Girls Club are always looking for volunteers to spend some time with kids. Agencies that serve food or provide clothing to the less fortunate are also always looking for volunteers to help sort food and hang clothing. Contact your local groups and see how you can “Pay it Forward” with them.
20. **Jingle Bells** – Contact a mentally handicapped facility such as ADEC and make arrangements for your group to go Christmas caroling there.

Volunteer Opportunities with Santa's Pantry

1. In November and December 2008, Santa's Pantry will be holding a big fundraising event to raise food donations for the food pantry at Guidance Ministries. We will offer to the public the chance to bring their children AND their own cameras and take pictures in exchange for food donations. Children will be given the chance to draw a "coupon" from Santa's bag as their "gift". If a child receives a "coupon" that says it is for a "Big Gift" they will need to come back to draw again. We will be giving many things away including a airplane ride with Santa, a autographed picture of Hannah Montana, a trip on the South Shore to the Shedd Aquarium and more. We expect this to be a huge event. We need volunteers for the following areas:
 - a. Someone to volunteer/donate to print fliers
 - b. People to load food donations into cars and transport to Guidance Ministries during the event.
 - c. People to send out emails to their family and friends to help spread the word of the event.
 - d. People to contact local farms and try to get meat donated
2. Santa's Pantry will open a P.O. box in October and advertise that children can send letters to Santa there. We need volunteers to help write letters. A sample letter will be given and we will meet at the main branch of the public library. Volunteers need to provide paper, envelopes and stamps.
3. In 2009 we will need volunteers to help us work at the Niles Haunted House. You do not need to be in the scary part of it. Volunteers need to be at least 18 years old. The Niles Haunted House will pay Santa's Pantry for the volunteers. We plan to use the money to apply for a 501C number so we can help people with further Pay It Forward projects. We are also looking for a attorney that would donate their time to help us apply.