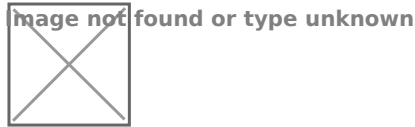


St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in West Babylon, New York Supports 300 Families With Their Expanded Food Pantry



West Babylon, New York—Every Tuesday and Thursday, volunteers from Philoptochos, Greek School parents, GOYANS and several members of the parish of St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church in West Babylon, New York gather to work at the St. Nicholas Food Pantry. Before the food pantry was established, the St. Nicholas parish provided gift cards to their neighbors in need. Executive Director of the food pantry Patty Vorilas approached Fr. Demetrios Kazakis about transforming this informal charity into a fully operational and effective food pantry. The pantry is dedicated to the memory of Ms. Vorilas's father, a selfless man who gave whatever he could to his neighbors. Fr. Kazakis was supportive of this initiative and was eager to get it started, however, St. Nicholas did not have the facilities at the time to operate a food pantry on site.

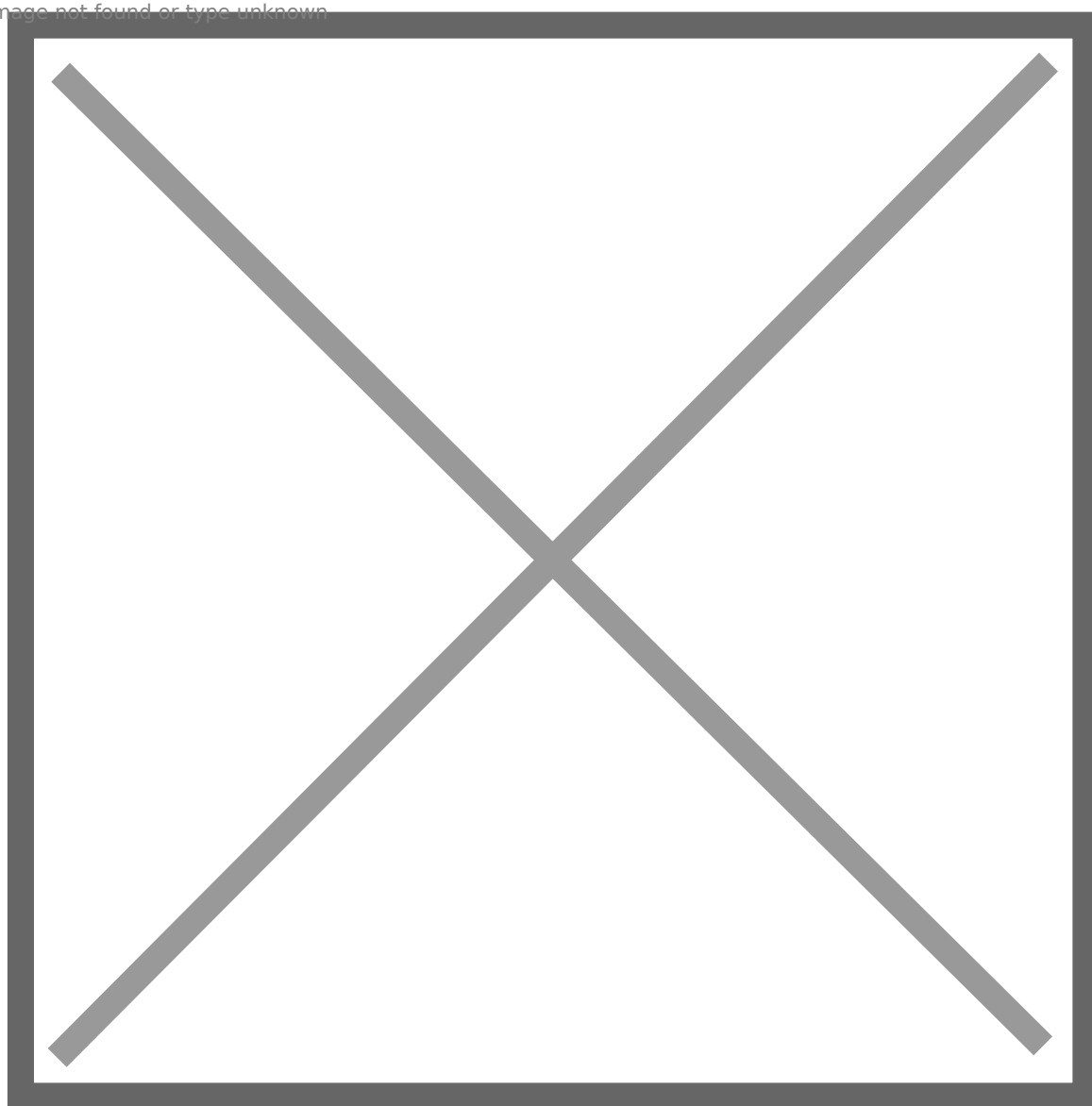
Once the new wing of St. Nicholas was built with a lower level, Ms. Vorilas along with several other members started to put the food pantry in motion. The St. Nicholas Food Pantry officially opened November 17, 2020 with a few shelves to support thirty families in the area. Celebrating three years of operation in November 2023, the St. Nicholas food pantry now supports 300 families.

The St. Nicholas Food Pantry is able to support so many families because of their partnerships with Long Island Cares and Island Harvest, providing produce, dairy products, meats, fish and canned goods, and with the generosity of St. Nicholas parishioners. Aside from monetary donations, several parishioners frequently donate non-essential items such as paper towels, toilet paper, diapers, body wash, toothbrushes, etc.

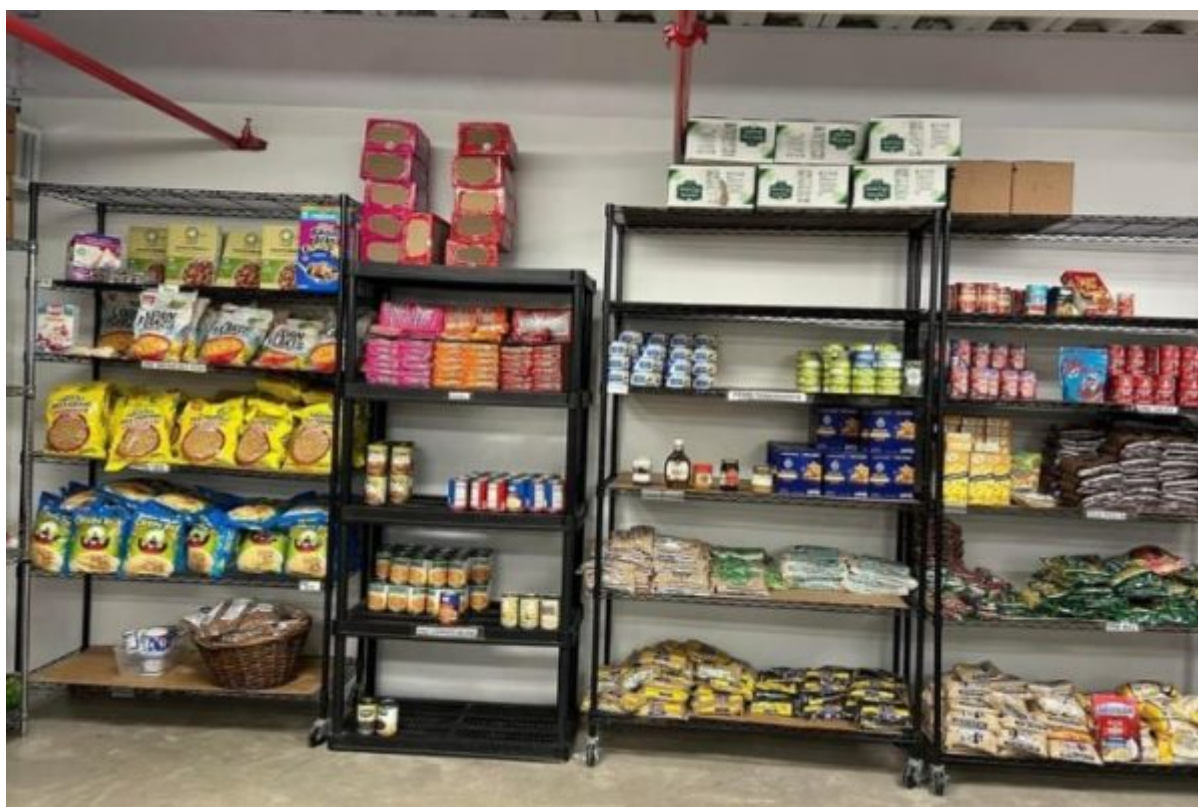
Last year, Ms. Vorilas, on behalf of the food pantry, applied for a grant through Long Island Cares from the town of Babylon and was granted \$10,000 to expand their facilities. With the funds from this grant and the generosity of Maria and Harry Hanson, St. Nicholas allowed the pantry space to expand tremendously and add freezers, refrigerators, heating, lighting, and more.

The families that the food pantry support come from near and far, all are welcome. The St. Nicholas Food Pantry is a client choice pantry, where clients can pick the food products they would like to take home. Those who are served by the food pantry are able to come twice a month and anyone who cannot travel to St. Nicholas may have their items delivered to them.

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St. Nicholas Food Pantry November 2020



St. Nicholas Food Pantry January 2024

This past Thanksgiving, the St. Nicholas Food Pantry along with the Philoptochos were able to provide eighty families with full Thanksgiving meals, turkeys provided by Long Island Cares. Ms. Vorilas praised the volunteers for their dedication to the

pantry. Everyone who walks in is known by name and is a part of the St. Nicholas family. New friendships have blossomed, and old friendships have grown stronger through a shared commitment to giving to and communing with their neighbors.

If you would like to visit the St. Nicholas Food Pantry, donate items, or are interested in starting a food pantry in your parish, please contact the St. Nicholas office 631.587.1150 for further information.

Photos: St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church

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