

POINTS

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Food pantry thanks the community

In this season of giving, we, at Inter Parish Ministry, are truly grateful for the generosity and support shown to us throughout this year. For the past several years we have served more and more people each month as the economy continued to decline.

Economic conditions have not only affected low income and working poor families, but also our donors, who may be struggling to support us as generously as they have in years past. Some people who were previous donors find themselves in need and have come through our doors for help.

Food assistance is becoming the "new normal." Food pantries are no longer used just to meet



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emergency food needs. Families rely more and more on pantries to put food on their tables.

The new faces of hunger come from every neighborhood. Many have jobs but are "underem-

ployed." Seniors who have lost their retirement savings often have to choose between paying a medical bill and buying food.

years ago still apply. Tens of thousands of our neighbors are "ill housed, ill clothed and ill nourished."

Dwindling food supplies and donations are making it more and more difficult to meet the growing demand. At Inter Parish Ministry, we have experienced a 30 percent increase in families coming to us for assistance every month in 2011. In the past 3 years, the demand has risen 115 percent.

We serve all of Clermont County and parts of eastern Hamilton County and over 15,000 people have visited our locations in Newtown and Batavia this year, the most in our 47-year history. So far, because of our supporters,

we have not turned anyone in our service areas away.

Saying thank you seems inadequate, but this is the season of gratitude and we want to let you know that we appreciate this community of support. Thank you to every person who has embraced our mission by giving of your time and treasure. Thank you to our volunteers and our donors who have helped provide hope to our neighbors in need throughout the year. You truly have made a difference.

Lindsey Ein is the executive director of Inter Parish Ministry.