



## TIMING IS EVERYTHING

I suppose everyone has wondered at one time or another. Are we alone in this life? Is this it? Do we just stroll around on this planet, doing what we can in the time we have before shuffling off the mortal coil to become worm food. Is there a higher power out there watching over us?

Sometimes that higher power smacks you in the face as you survive a massive car wreck that should have been your ticket punch, other times it is subtler as it the timing of the rain.

Rain, rain, rain... so often was rain mentioned in the forecast that one expected there to be a run on gopher wood and animals to be marching two by two. The Boy Scout food drive was scheduled for Saturday the 11<sup>th</sup> of March. Scores of Boy Scouts would be scattered through the Capital City and surrounding areas retrieving bags of donated food and loading them into the vehicles of their parents and Scout leaders to deliver to the Samaritan Center where over a hundred volunteers would be waiting to unload, sort,

weigh, and stock the donations. All of this outdoors. This is not an event conducive to precipitation.



Scouts of all ages pitched in to make the *Scouting for Food* food drive a success.

The day arrived without any moisture but the prospects for making it through the day dry were not good. Marylyn DeFeo, Volunteer Executive Director, had repeatedly said that there would be nothing to worry about. There had never been rain during a

food drive. Marylyn has that kind of faith. She can trust that things will work out in the end. I always remember advice given to me by a college professor. Trust in God, but lock your doors anyway. To make matters worse, Marylyn was not going to be there. She had a family commitment she could not break, and left the drive in the hands of the staff.

Everything to combat the oncoming rain had been done. Extra tents had been erected to offer more shelter, ponchos were at the ready, and game plans to move the food inside had been made. The doors were locked, time to trust.

*Continued pg 2*

## TIMING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Warren Krech was on hand for a remote broadcast to help promote the food drive. As often as I gave him updates on poundage of food collected, I asked for updates on the approaching rain. Two o'clock seemed to be the magic time. KLIK and The Weather Channel were in agreement to that. Though as I watched the sky cloud up and the winds change, I began to have my doubts.

Valerie Acosta with the Boy Scouts was keeping track of the number of troops in, and how many were left in the field. Any guesses on when the last troops were to be in? Between 2:00 and 3:00; after the rain deadline. I kept a wary eye on the sky above, as the clouds and sun seemed to be dancing with each other. As the day moved on the food total continued to climb. The troops were coming in fast and furious, trying to get the Scouts in before the rain. 1:30 arrived. Warren began to break down the remote broadcast, no rain. Valerie went off to retrieve food that had been missed for one reason or another. 2:00 still dry, almost all the food is in, volunteers start to thin out and extra boxes are collected up and moved indoors. By 2:30, we are sure all the food is in. Time to break camp. The sun pops out, as if to be fighting back the clouds for us. By 3:00 everything is picked up, the tents' vendor has shown up to collect them and it looks like we will make it out dry after all. The food is in, the doors are locked and everyone is still dry. Then a van from KMIZ pulls in. They want to do a story on the food drive. I look up to see the clouds winning out over the sun. Looks like I won't escape after all. As the reporter sets up we converse of what he wants to film, since all the food is put away already about that time A truck with a one Scout, one leader and about 10 bags pulls in. They had gone back through their route and found some bags that were late to be put out or missed on earlier runs.

Manna from heaven? For the reporter it might as well have been. He was able to film the Scout and a few volunteers that were left unload and carry in the food. He took some footage in the warehouse and was ready to go. I locked the door and set the alarm for the building. It was pushing 4:00 when I stepped outside for the last time. Splat! It hit me right in the face, a raindrop the size of a golf ball and it had friends. Ah ha! It didn't quite hold out, the reporter wanted to do some footage of the building exterior. Rain? Rain? Where have you gone? It looked like the sky was ready to burst but it was dry again. The reporter set up for his outside shots and I headed with some staff members for a celebratory beer at a downtown pub. Over 19,000 pounds of food had been collected. We had survived without Marylyn, we had stayed dry, and we had gone well past the 2:00 deadline.

About 30 seconds after we all walked into the bar, the sky let loose. It rained with a vengeance. I watched through the windows, laughing to myself. Did a food drive influence the weather patterns of Central Missouri that day? You won't find any meteorological proof, and skeptics are in no short supply, but I'd like to think so. I'll still be locking my doors mind you, but it is nice to have a little trust too.

The Boy Scout Food Drive collected 19,639 pounds of food. A total under last years record haul, but still over 2000 pounds more than any other year. Thank you for all the community support. The donors of food are just the beginning. Without the help of barbeque chefs, box carriers, cookie bakers, DJ's and can sorters the drive would not be the same. We appreciate all you do to make us successful. The Samaritan Center is a hometown charity, and we are grateful for our hometown support.

## MARYLYN'S MESSAGE

It's Time for Daffodils, Robins and Shamrocks!

Sometimes the warm spring breezes and the greening of the earth make me think that spring isn't putting me in the mood for much Lenten fasting. I once had a good friend who is now in heaven that used to tell me the God gave all these wonderful gifts of nature for us to enjoy. He said, I think God is most happy when his children are sitting and visiting with Him on a sunny day. I have to agree why would He send all this beauty if he didn't enjoy our smiles more than our grumbling and pity parties. So my advice is go out and enjoy spring in all her glory and listen to the Spirit as she pipes you a tune on the spring wind. Enough of my philosophizing. Thanks to all of you who so graciously showed up at the Scouting food drive to help unload, sort, weigh and stack those heavy boxes of food. It always makes me feel secure when I walk through the warehouse and see full shelves ready to feed our hungry friends in crisis.

A few weeks ago a mother brought in her sick child to the medical clinic. The nurse asked her to take her child to Pediatric Care and they left and went to their car. Shortly after, the mother and child were back. I asked if they needed directions to the pediatrician. No, said the mother. She broke down in tears. My daughter is just so hungry and we haven't picked up our food as yet and she thought we would be too late to come back. Needless to say we quickly prepared their food order and gave the child some juice and crackers to eat in the car. After they left I wondered if the child had the flu or was just so hungry that her stomach was cramping from being empty. The food you sorted Saturday will go to help those kinds of families immediately.

Our next big event is making sure all of our little people receive an Easter basket on Easter morning. So many of you have already brought in gorgeous filled baskets all wrapped in beautiful cellophane with tiny gifts and bunnies and more included in them. We will give away about 800 baskets this year so we need as many of you as can to drop off a basket. Maybe your children and grandchildren are grown and you could do it for them or just because you know the little ones will grin from ear to ear as they open it up on Easter. We also give each family a ten pound boneless ham for their Holiday dinner so if you would like to help with that project buy a ham and drop it off or send a check marked Easter Ham in the memo. We have 1400 families that will come to us for food before the Easter break.

God Bless all of you for always thinking of those in need in your own community. Remember to keep them in prayer as we keep all of you in our prayers here at the Center. Have a Blessed and Happy Easter!!

## HELP MAKE MOMS FEEL SPECIAL

What is a Mother's Day basket? It is a treat box for moms and it can contain anything you would thing a mom would like. Make up, bath salts, fancy soaps, lotion, candy, a good book; the options for contents are very high. We ask that the total basket be in the neighborhood of ten dollars and that it be new items that the mom can treat herself with. We will begin collecting these baskets April 7<sup>th</sup> and will begin distribution after the Easter break. The idea is to give moms something nice for themselves to help recognize their efforts in time with Mother's Day.



Student Athletes from Jefferson City Public High School help area scouts unload an arriving truck at the Boy Scout Food Drive. Several youth groups contribute labor to these large food drives. They contribute to the essential workforce of volunteers that keep the Samaritan Center running.

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**DATES TO REMEMBER**

April

- 7 Beging Mother's Day Basket Collection
- 13 Close at Noon. No Clinic.
- 14-17 CLOSED Easter Holidays

May

- 13 Letter Carrier's Food Drive
- 29 CLOSED Memorial Day

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**Hours of Operation**

- Open to Public: 9:30am-11:30am Monday-Thursday  
4:00pm-6:00pm Thursday
- Medical Clinic: 4:00pm-6:00pm Thursday
- Dental Clinic: by appointment Only,  
call (573)761-3473 for information
- Staff Office Hours: 8:00am-4:00pm Monday, Wednesday, Friday  
8:00am-6:00pm Tuesday Thursday

