



**PROCLAMATION HONORING AND COMMENDING THE FOOD PANTRY AT OUR LADY OF SORROWS AS "VILLAGER OF THE MONTH" FOR JANUARY 2021 FOR THEIR WORK IN THE TOWNSHIP OF SOUTH ORANGE VILLAGE**

Whereas, Philosopher Simone Weil said, "It is an eternal obligation toward the human being not to let him suffer from hunger when one has a chance of coming to his assistance"; and

Whereas, the Food Pantry at Our Lady of Sorrows in South Orange, New Jersey was established over 40 years ago to help fight hunger within the community; and

Whereas, the Food Pantry relies entirely on dedicated volunteers who shop, transport, shelve, monitor food levels and client volume, organize volunteers, make food packages, and serve clients; and

Whereas, the donations of food and funds and our volunteer team come from Our Lady of Sorrows and many individuals, businesses, and non-profit organizations in South Orange and Maplewood; and

Whereas, the dedicated volunteers distribute food every 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month; and

Whereas, the Food Pantry is a member of and receives support from MEND (Meeting Essential Needs with Dignity) which is the oldest and largest interfaith network of pantries in Essex County; and

Whereas, 11% of households in the United States have experienced food insecurity in 2019 which has increased to approximately 23.5% in 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic; and

Whereas, the pandemic has affected the ability of 30 million children in the US that are dependent on school for one or more meals each week to gain access due to closures and families have had a loss of income that makes them more susceptible to food insecurity; and

Whereas, prior to the pandemic, the Food Pantry was serving 100-125 families every 2 weeks and after March 2020, the Food Pantry began to increase and is now between 350-450 families every 2 weeks; and

Whereas, this past Thanksgiving the Food Pantry distributed food to 504 families which is the largest number they had seen; and

Whereas, the Food Pantry not only serve patrons in South Orange and Maplewood but also serves neighboring towns; and

Whereas, the Food Pantry has seen many first-time visitors this year from South Orange and Maplewood; and

Whereas, the Food Pantry recognizes that not everyone can come to a pantry or may know where one is located so they have created partnerships with the Parenting Center and Cougar Cares that serve local students and their families, and Two Towns for All Ages, which serves seniors; and

Whereas, the Food Pantry coordinates with St. Joe's MEND food pantry in Maplewood to ensures that all those in need have access to food; and

Whereas, as the Food Pantry receives no direct state aid or local governmental support they rely on monetary donations to purchase food in bulk from local stores and the Community Food Bank of New Jersey; and

Whereas, with the increase of the number of Americans that are food insecure, the Community Relations Committee commends the Food Pantry of South Orange for their selfless service in ensuring that all patrons have access to food, are treated with patience, kindness, and dignity; and

Whereas, we encourage the South Orange community to continue to volunteer their time, donate both monetary or in goods and to continue to spread the word of how this local organization continues to make a difference in the lives of our residents for over 40 years; and

NOW, THEREFORE, I, SHEENA C. COLLUM, Village President of the Township of South Orange Village, County of Essex, State of New Jersey, on behalf of the residents of the Township of South Orange Village, the Village Board of Trustees, and myself, hereby do recognize and commend the Food Pantry at Our Lady of Sorrows as "Villager of the Month" for January 2021 for the work they have done, and their wonderful contributions in the Township of South Orange Village.

*Dated this 25th day of January, 2021*

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**HONORABLE SHEENA C. COLLUM**  
**Village President of the**  
**Township of South Orange Village**