



# Foothills Rural Community Ministry

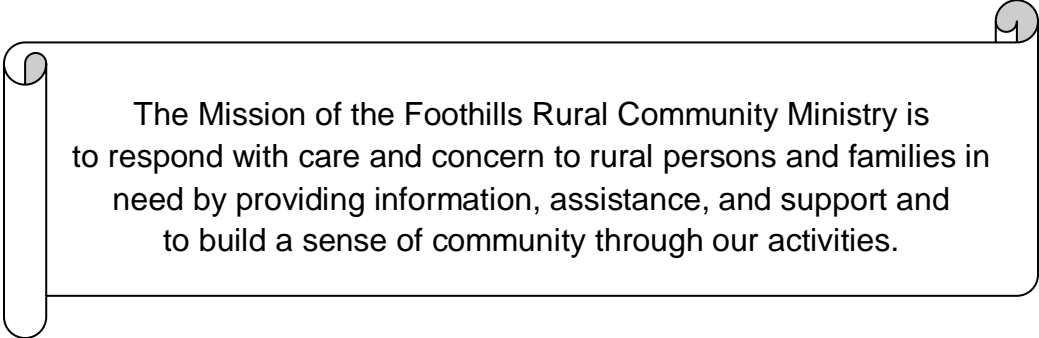
## Annual Report

### 2015

Carol Garrett, Office Manager  
Fred VanNamee, Community Relations Director

Francine Rose, Thrift Shop Coordinator  
Gail Brett, Coffeehouse Coordinator  
Sharon Firley and Lorraine Pawson,  
Christmas Baskets  
Lois Reed, Sarah's Pet Pantry  
Cheryl Edmiston, Food Pantry  
Pat Pepe, Food \$ense

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The Mission of the Foothills Rural Community Ministry is to respond with care and concern to rural persons and families in need by providing information, assistance, and support and to build a sense of community through our activities.

### **OUR ORGANIZATION:**

Foothills Rural Community Ministry is a nondenominational, independent, charitable organization. Although we rent space and much of our ministry is delivered from the Holland Patent Presbyterian Church, we are a coalition of area churches and organizations, governed by an elected council in accordance with our own constitution and by-laws.

#### Council Members 2015

Kathy Hughes, Moderator	Jean Bray	Mary Evans	Lois Reed
Joan Kotwica, Vice Moderator	Gail Brett	Sharon Firley	Karen Pike-Roberts
Dee Krutz, Secretary	Douglas Churcher	Betsy Mack	Pat Robinson
Bonnie Churcher, Treasurer	Cheryl Edmiston	Deborah Ouderkirk	

Detailed information and updates for all of our programs and events can be found on our website:

[www.foothillsruralcommunityministry.org](http://www.foothillsruralcommunityministry.org)

or find us on Facebook

## PUTTING THE NEEDS OF OTHERS FIRST

An annual report for Foothills Rural Community Ministry provides us the opportunity to look back on our year's activities. We can assess our service to those in our community who are less fortunate and having a difficult time meeting their basic needs. Part of our mission statement stresses our effort to serve others. The goal of all of our programs is to help generate the resources needed to help those in need in our community. Even from our Coffee House, which provides non-alcoholic entertainment and social interaction within our community, the profits realized are used to purchase food for distribution in our food pantry.

When we look at the numbers we supplied a little over 89,000 meals to nearly 6000 clients. Those are remarkable numbers for a small community like ours. While we did not see dramatic increases in the number of clients in 2015 our level of need remained constant. It is important to note that the numbers of those we serve have nearly doubled over the past 4 years. I want to acknowledge the grants we received from the United Way of the Valley and Greater Utica Area, Wal-Mart, Stewarts, The Presbytery of Utica, The Annual Methodist Conference, U.S. Brookfield Foundation, and the State of New York. We received no federal grant funding in 2015. I must also stress the importance of the financial support we receive from our area churches, several community civic groups and local governments. A large portion of our support also comes from individuals in our community.

Years ago, I realized that what matters to God is for us to pay attention to the needs of others and to give wholeheartedly. We should be reminded that putting the needs of others before our own is a sign of our love for God.

Foothills is very blessed to have a very dedicated volunteer pool supporting each of our program areas. Without these dedicated people Foothills could not exist. The countless hours people offer keep our programs operating and make our organization stronger. We are an organization made of many denominations, and also include dedicated but unchurched people. But we all agree that it is when we put the needs of others before our own toward a worthwhile purpose that we ourselves reap immeasurable rewards.

Going forward into 2016 we will be challenged to meet our needs for resources to allow us to continue to provide the services needed in our area. The media reports an improved economy. The economy is better for those with good paying jobs. Those dealing with limited incomes and health issues, the elderly on limited fixed incomes, and families with young children will continue to rely on Foothills in their times of need.

Fred Van Namee, Director of Community Relations

## Food Pantry 2015

### “Striving With Compassion To Eliminate Hunger in Our Community By Sharing Food”

As the national economy is moving in an improved and positive direction, rural economies continue to struggle. The food pantry has seen an increase of 18% more clients using the pantry in 2015 over 2014. In 2015 we served between 170 and 200 families each month.

The increase is due to a multitude of factors:

1. Injury to clients who are now unable to work
2. Long term sickness
3. Loss of jobs
4. Divorce leaving each adult family member with only one income with one member supporting the children
5. Death of a spouse reducing social security income for the elderly
6. College students trying to make ends meet as they struggle through receiving their degree
7. High cost of utilities and health insurance reducing money available for food.

To help stretch the dollars donated to the food pantry this year, chickens were provided to the families of one person in lieu of a turkey at Thanksgiving.



The “Kids Pack Bag Program” for July and August doubled from 130 bags for 2014 to over 240 bags for 2015. The goal of the program is to help fill the gap left when students do not receive breakfast and lunch at school. As summer drew near this year we had parents and children asking if we were going to continue this very popular program. Of course, we said yes.

Know that your donations make a difference to your neighbors.

Cheryl Edmiston, Food Pantry Co-coordinator



I would like to start out with my name is Francine Rose and I just recently took over the thrift store as manager in September 2015. I have made a few changes to the store and the customers seem to enjoy the changes and have commented on them when shopping. I have goals that are set and I hope to be doing a lot more changes in the future to the store.

I have tried to organize the clothing by color and not size. I have also donated a lot of clothes to the Salvation Army and also the Rescue Mission. With the store being small in size and not a lot of room, the store is not able to keep up with the amount of donations at times. The store has donated men and woman's suits to Salvation Army, and donated vases to a nearby flower shop in Rome. I have still a lot of ideas for the store and hope to accomplish them on a weekly basis one at a time.

As the manger, I have been able to help out a family which was in a fire with clothes, blankets, pillows etc., at no charge to them. I was able to give a girl that goes to one of the schools in Holland Patent a dress for her Prom at no charge, and during the holidays I gave several Christmas decorations away and held a raffle for a rocking horse. I have crazy bag sales every week and the customers seem to like it, I try to change it to something different every week.

The Thrift Shop has had another successful year for helping families and their children. Even though sales were down from last year, the store itself is there to help families in need. Sales for 2014 were \$15,359.50 and for 2015 were \$11,823.09 down only by \$3,536.41. Due to the rising prices I don't feel that is a dramatic loss for the store.

Donations are accepted when the store is open the first three Saturdays of the month between 9am to 1pm and also the fourth Thursday of the month from 9am to 1pm. I am also pleased to announce the store will also be open on the first Wednesday of the month 5pm to 7pm starting in March of this year. Donations are also accepted on Wednesday's from 9am to 12pm and the thrift store can provide a tax receipt upon request.

Special thank you to all the volunteers that help out in thrift store and donate their time. I appreciate the dedication and all the support from all of you.

Looking forward to a very successful 2016 at the thrift store with some exciting new changes.

Francine Rose, Thrift Shop Manager



## Community Garden and Gardens in a Bucket



The Food Bank of CNY's Garden in a Bucket Program was a success again this year. We were given 40 buckets as well as tomato and pepper plants to plant in them. We drilled drainage holes in the buckets then filled each one with soil and a plant. The soil was donated by Terra Dolce. We distributed them to our food pantry clients.

Eric McCue and his family tended the community garden and harvested fresh vegetables for the Food Pantry all summer.

Here is an estimate for each item we brought into foothills on Saturdays:

1.5 lb. Peas / 15 lb. Yellow Heirloom Tomatoes / 9 lb. Cherry Tomatoes / 4 lb. Broccoli / 2.5 lb. Green Peppers / 5 large heads Purple Cabbage / 3.5 lbs. Onions

Thanks To Erik Darling of Powell Rd for his donation of Chicken and Hen manure. Thanks to Robin Woeltje Loranger from the Wethersfield farm on Route 365 for her donation of Horse and Cow manure. As much as we needed! Thanks to Jan and Karen Barendse, owners of River Road Farm and Greenhouse located 9182 River Rd in Marcy, for their donation of all the vegetable plants our garden needed! Really wonderful people. Thanks to Doug @ Agway for donating all the onions.

The Garden was 100% organic. And we are proud of that (:

## Social Media

In addition to our webpage <[foothillsruralcommunityministry.org](http://foothillsruralcommunityministry.org)> Foothills maintains a Facebook page. The Park Coffee House also posts news on its own Facebook page. The farmers market maintains a webpage <<http://www.trentonmarket.com/>> and a Facebook page, both of which can be found by searching for Trenton NY Farmers Market. Otherwise you end up in New Jersey.

## Christmas Baskets 2015

Many fundraisers were held throughout the year – a bake sale at the Holland Patent Mayfaire, our annual “Food 4 Food Sale” and bottle & can drive at St. Leo & St. Ann’s Church, a raffle by Haven Salon, and an ongoing bottle and can drive at Cushman’s in Floyd. The profits from these fundraisers were used to purchase food from the Food Bank of Central NY and to purchase winter coats for children.

In September 2015, an ad was placed in the Rural Star asking for anyone who wished to receive, or knew of anyone who wished to receive, a Christmas basket in our (FRCM) area to call Foothills and leave a message. We also had a representative of the Christmas Basket project at FRMC in the Fellowship Hall of the Holland Patent Presbyterian church all of the days in October and November (2015) that FRCM Food Pantry was open to collect input from anyone who wished to receive a basket. We also received names of families anonymously (93 families and 18 senior citizens), who were called to confirm if they were in need of a basket this year.

Our shopping for food and winter clothing is done at area businesses. We purchased 180 turkeys from Target (@\$0.79/lb.). Sysco Syracuse donated 20 hams (worth over \$400.00). Then, on Dec. 14th we received a large shipment of nonperishable food from the Food Bank of Central NY. The fees for this food were paid for from the various fundraisers as well as the funds budgeted for the Christmas basket project by FRCM and other donations. We went to Wagner farms to pick up donated squash. Money donated by the Holland Patent



Presbyterian Church allowed us to purchase tangerines from Target. On Saturday Dec. 19th two wonderful families from St. Leo-St. Ann’s went to North Star Orchards, where our friend George provided them with 260 bags of apples (6 in each). Thus, we were able to provide every family with fresh fruit this Christmas. We also purchased 45 fifty-pound bags of potatoes from Joseph Rapasadi & Sons. Our long-time supplier, Isadore Rapasadi & Sons, has gone out of business but luckily their cousin Joseph was able to help us. Many food items came in from all the Holland Patent and Remsen schools as well as many MORE squash (it was a good squash year!). Also, all year long, Sharon Firley, Nancy Minogue, Candy Owen, Mary Currie and others shop, shop and shop for the winter outerwear that is given to children who are in need of these items. Individuals and families from area churches and businesses shop for and donate presents for the children.



A total of 247 baskets were given out. We gave out 186 baskets to families with children, and 61 baskets to senior citizens and special needs adults (106 people). This means that we served a total of 992 people, 480 of who were children. Each basket contained nonperishable food items, various hygiene products, produce, and meat (either a 12-14 lb. turkey or large ham for the families and a small ham for the senior citizens). The children of the families received two gifts each, one of clothing and one toy as well as some candy. Many of the children also received winter coats (186), snow pants (129) and boots (248). All of the children received socks, hats and mittens. We had a wonderful donation of handmade hats, mittens, headbands, scarves and lap blankets (~450) from some very busy knitters of St. Leo-St. Ann's, the Holland Patent Presbyterian church and others. Everyone received gift cards for milk purchased from Stewart's Shops.

Over half of the baskets were picked up on Saturday evening, Dec. 19th. The rest were given out on the 20th, and a few were delivered. We had 8 volunteers from Utica College's pre-med program, as well as some strong young folks of our community to help us carry all the food and gifts up the stairs and out to the waiting cars. We also wish to thank our ever-vigilant (and often very cold) volunteers who stand outside to distribute the turkeys, hams, potatoes and fruit.

Many people, both young and old, came to help sort food and gifts, move or carry heavy loads, wrap gifts and feed volunteers including youth from our community such as: boy scouts, girls scouts, junior and senior honor societies, confirmation students, basketball and wrestling teams. We cannot do this project without the help we receive from our wonderfully generous volunteers.

We were able to do all of this with the help of some grants, but mainly from our wonderful community! Schools, businesses, churches and individuals worked together to help make Christmas brighter, stomachs fuller, and winter a little warmer for many individuals!

Committee Members: Sharon Firley, Nancy Minogue, Bonnie Tuttle, Elaine Angwin, John Angwin, Candy Owen, Bill Owen, Pat Robinson, Bob Robinson, Bryan Rogowski, Brandy Warren, Joan Kotwica, Paul Kotwica, Bonnie Churcher, Kelly Merrill, and Lorraine Pawson



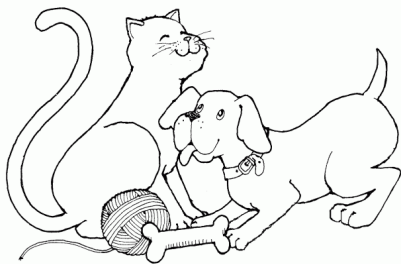
## Back to School Supply Project

In the summer, FRCM sent articles to area newspapers requesting donations of school supplies. Churches and area businesses helped collect these supplies. Backpacks and book bags were purchased with grant money from Stewarts. The donated and purchased items were stored in the basement of the Presbyterian Church, where volunteers sorted them. They were taken to the schools of Remsen and Holland Patent, where school personnel distributed them to students who have a need for supplies.



This project fills a local need, as students are required to have many supplies to prepare them to go back to school. This can be a very difficult added expense to a family's already strained budget, especially when there are multiple children in a family. We appreciate the generosity of the community in helping us to help the students of our area.

## Sarah's Pet Pantry



Sarah's Pet Pantry has had a very good year helping pets remain in their loving homes by assisting owners in financial need with dog and cat food. All pet food and supplies are purchased with funds specifically donated for Sarah's Pet Pantry.

We have had many donations from the community – schools, businesses, families, and our “regular” patrons. We have also done well at our fundraisers - we had a booth at the Remsen Barnfest and sold pet-related crafts at the Barneveld village-wide garage sales this summer.

At this time, we are able to offer our clients larger amounts of pet food, cat litter, and pet treats. We have begun offering 4 spayings/neuterings per month. The cost of the spaying or neutering is paid by Sarah's Pet Pantry, a small amount by the client, and by a discount from Beaver Meadow. Animals are chosen through a lottery format.

Sarah's Pet Pantry is beginning our 6<sup>th</sup> year! We feel very fortunate to have a home at the Twin Churches and to be part of Foothills Rural Community Ministry. We look forward to 2016 and continuing to help pets remain home with their owners.

Lois Reed, Sarah's Pet Pantry Coordinator

## The Park Coffee House 2015 Program Year



The Park Coffee House has successfully provided affordable live acoustic music for our community for the year 2015. Attendance has been very good, and the quality of music has been excellent. Performers who play at the Park Coffee House always comment on how much they enjoy our audience and how appreciative they are of this acoustic venue to share their music. Musicians reap rewards when they can share their music and the Park Coffee House provides them this opportunity. Unique to our coffeehouse is the fact that it continues to be run 100% by volunteers. Even our concert attendees help with cleanup. Without the many volunteers who perform the necessary jobs, the coffeehouse would not run. We are very fortunate to have so many dedicated people willing to help.

This was our first full year of the coffeehouse being run by a committee and it seems to be working very well. The committee would like to thank Ken Allen and Debbie Ouderkirk for their time on the Park Coffee House Committee. They have left the committee but continue to support our mission.

The committee also lost one of its key members: John Brett. John passed away in February of 2015. His enthusiasm and dedication is sorely missed.

The coffeehouse committee now consists of the following members:

Art Baird –Publicity and flyers, Facebook page, Sound

Cynde Baird –Publicity and flyers

Gail Brett –Contact person for Coffee House, Book performers, Sign checks, Meeting minutes, Annual report, Foothills Council representative

Bonnie Churcher - Financial reports, Sign checks, Deposit money, Flyer mailings

Gaby McGhee - Volunteer coordinator, Sign checks

John Preston - Advisory role, back up for sound

In 2015 the Park Coffee House produced 12 concerts and had a total of 572 patrons. This is a 17.45% increase of patrons from last year. The total income from admissions, snack bar, and Ad Campaign was \$9333.22. Of this, \$1450.00 was from the Ad Campaign. The total expenses were \$4670.75, for a net profit of \$4662.47, which is a 13.65% increase from 2014.

We continue to use Facebook to promote the coffeehouse and have noticed an increase of comments and “likes” for our page. We believe this and the articles in the Rural Star and other media promoting the coffeehouse have helped us increase our attendance.

We are looking forward to another successful year of the Park Coffee House.

Respectfully Submitted,

Gail E. Brett



## Trenton Farmers' Market

Our Farmers' Market experienced another successful year for both customers and vendors. We had 23 different vendors, with an average of 12-14 vendors each Saturday.

The addition of a beef farm and new produce vendors were well received, providing for more variety. Because our location is perfect for tourists, many customers stopping by were from out of state. Both our local customers and visitors to this area are pleased with the growth of the market and the number of products that we are able to offer. A highlight of the market season was a visit from the Utica Zoomobile. Thanks to Linda Gage for arranging this event.

The coupon program was a success again this year. We gave \$5 coupons to our Food Pantry clients that they could use to purchase food at the Farmers' Market. In 2015 customers used 697 coupons, for a total of \$ 3485 FRCM funds spent on redeeming those coupons from the farmers. This is a slight decrease over the previous year. Some customers spent them weekly while others saved them for the end of the season to purchase vegetables that would keep in cold storage for winter use. This is money that not only benefits our clients, but also benefits the local economy.

Nick Keblish, one of the market co-managers, will be moving on to run his new Prospect Falls Winery. We thank Nick for his years of fine management and welcome Bill Hajdasz of Triple M&R Farm as our new co-manager.

We look forward to another very successful market season in 2016 with some exciting new vendors.

Bonnie Churcher, Trenton Farmers' Market Co-Manager

Bill Hajdasz, Trenton Farmers' Market Co-Manager

Alpaca Hats  
Alpaca Socks  
Apples  
Beans  
Beef  
Berries  
Bracelets  
Bread  
Broccoli  
Cabbage  
Carrots  
Cheese  
Coffee  
Corn  
Crafts  
Cucumbers  
Eggs  
Flowers  
Garlic  
Herbs  
Honey  
Jams  
Jellies  
Kale  
Lettuce  
Maple Syrup  
Onions  
Pastries  
Peas  
Peppers  
Pies  
Plants  
Potatoes  
Pumpkins  
Soaps  
Etc.

## Food \$en\$e: A Grocery Purchasing Program



Food \$ense is a program that provides quality food for less than retail prices through the Food Bank of Central New York. The cost of the package is still only \$15.50 but the groceries it contains have a value of about \$30. This program is available to anyone who would like to save some money.

One goal of the program is to help families maintain self-sufficiency. In 2015 the volume of orders was down, averaging about 40 items per month (packages and specials). We plan to try new ways to publicize the program because it could be a valuable way for families to save money on food. A core group of seven volunteers contributed a total of 337 hours to run this program – taking orders, sorting food into boxes, and distributing the food to customers.

### Treasurer's report

We are seeing an increase in the ways that technology helps us receive donations. Individuals donate through Paypal and through bank automatic bill pay services. We receive spendable credits from the Staples rewards program. Anyone can contribute to that by giving our phone number 865-5854 when shopping at Staples. We receive checks from Amazon Smile when shoppers designate us as their charity when shopping online. We are looking for more programs that allow shoppers to designate us to receive the credits from rewards programs because it is a painless way to donate that adds up to significant funds for Foothills.

The result of deficit budgets for the last few years has diminished our bank accounts. I used \$4000 from our savings account this year to meet expenses. We try to reserve that account for emergencies and for replacing equipment.

The council could not find anything in this budget that they were willing to cut. Every service we provide is needed by our community. Therefore we have formed a fundraising committee to look into ways to increase our income. We are currently looking for ideas and exploring some possibilities.

The following financial report includes the value of donated goods and services for 2015. The 2016 budget includes only monetary income and expenses.

Bonnie Churcher, Treasurer