



# Haymarket Regional Food Pantry

Helping Other People Eat

Dear Sir/Madame,

It is my distinct pleasure to nominate the Regency Women's Club (RWC) for the 2021 Virginia Governor's Volunteerism and Community Service Award. In my role as the Executive Director of the Haymarket Regional Food Pantry – an all-volunteer organization, I have worked extensively with this group for several years. Prior to 2020 the RWC provided monthly support for our organization – one-month hygiene items, the next was cereal, another month they purchased Thanksgiving dinner items and pre-packaged them for our clients, etc. We always knew we could count on them.

Last year, however, the women saw that we were struggling. The families we serve jumped from 200 in February to over 2,000 in April. Enter the Women's Club to the rescue:

- In April - 34 members donned masks and went door to door through their community collecting checks and donations from neighbors. They raised **\$33,341** which we immediately used for grocery store gift cards. The cards were invaluable as most of our volunteers were unwilling to work in a pandemic coupled with our inability to purchase food from overwhelmed stores.
- In June, understanding that our needs continued to climb, the Women's Club sponsored a food drive which netted in **2,302 pounds** of food and an additional **\$8,175**.
- In January 2021 the Women's Club took to the community streets once more to collect donations for the Haymarket Regional Food Pantry – now serving 2,876 people monthly – close to 36,000 annually, and they raised **\$29,760**.
- Their support of our organization continues with yet another collection next month.
- In less than a year these industrious women have **raised over \$70,000** for our organization as well as carloads of food donations. They are by far our largest community group provider.

With the support of the RWC we have been able to provide more food to our clients (last month over 36,000 pounds). Further, we have been able to feed the children home from school healthy breakfasts, lunches and snacks – we previously did this only for school breaks. The RWC has allowed us to provide consistent, nutritious food to our clients on the west end of Prince William County. These Ladies are beyond generous helping our neighbors in need – I hope you agree with me that the Governor's Award could not go to a more deserving group.

Respectfully submitted,

Eileen F. Smith, M.Ed.

Executive Director, Haymarket Regional Food Pantry