

Extend thanks (and more if you can)

Website connects you with local people in need of help

The popular image of Thanksgiving is one of happy families sitting around tables overflowing with bounty. They then move to the family room to reminisce, watch football and maybe plan a Black Friday shopping spree.

Of course, not every family is able to participate in the idealized version of the holiday. Financial limitations, medical issues and different family structures can limit people's ability to celebrate — or to even put any food on the table.

Friends of the Poor is a local group dedicated to helping the less fortunate.

The non-profit charitable organization was founded in 1986 by the late Sister Adrian Barrett. It is sponsored by the Congregation of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

People don't just need help on holidays, and Friends of the Poor is there for them all year. The holidays, however, bring an increase in activity and special projects, as well as an increase in the need for help. The website, friendsofthepoorscranton.org, explains the organization's mission and offers ways you can help.

The How to Help section gives information on the different ways you can give. You can volunteer your time and talent if you can't afford to give money. People are needed to help collect, organize and distribute the food, clothing and household items that are donated. The site provides contact information if you want to get involved.

If you don't have time, but want to help, you can donate money or items. Food, clothing, household items and even furniture are accepted and given at no cost to the group's clients. The site has information on where to drop off items or how to arrange for pick up if necessary. There is also information on how to make financial donations either by mail or digitally through the site.

If you are a person or family in need the site has information on how you can get help. The Services section details the food pantries, tutoring, assistance with utilities, referrals to other agencies and other help that is available. The Events section has a calendar of special meals, trips and other activities that are sponsored throughout the year.

The website doesn't have the slick look of a commercial site or even a larger non-profit. But it is well organized, clean and easy to navigate. It's almost exclusively text with only a few graphic elements. It could use some photos and videos to help tell the stories of its clients and maybe attract more support.

Enjoy the holidays, and if you can, give something to help others enjoy theirs too.

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