

In Oregon, shared values keep one volunteer coming back to The Salvation Army

For Patricia Chipman and her son, volunteering is a family affair.

Last year, during a visit to the Newport (Oregon) Corps' [Food Pantry of Hope](#), Patricia Chipman and her son, Jacob Green, saw a notice asking for Christmas helpers.

“Volunteering—it’s something we can do to give back, right?” Chipman said, noting it’s something she and her 31-year-old autistic son like to do together. “We’re always looking for volunteer opportunities.”



So for Green and Chipman—who is employed full-time as her son’s autism support worker—volunteering with [The Salvation Army Newport Corps](#) is a family affair. During the 2023 holiday season, they helped the corps organize toy donations for its [Angel Tree program](#), and they came back in 2024 to do it again.

Initially, the pair met with Newport Corps Officer Lt. Michele Dell’Olio to make sure the toy-sorting project would be a good fit for Green—and it was.

Green said he especially enjoyed seeing some of the toys he played with when he was younger, like Legos and Hot Wheels, and knowing that other children would soon be enjoying them.

“I just think people should serve others more than themselves because that’s what Jesus taught,” he said.

That’s a philosophy Green’s family embodies. They live about 20 miles from Newport in Siletz, a small town of about 1,220 people adjacent to the [Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians](#) reservation.

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Patricia Chipman

“It is small, but it has a big heart,” Chipman said. “The tribe really supports the town well, and the town supports the tribe well...There’s a lot of help for people here. Everybody supports each other.”

The Chipman family does its part, operating a private food bank—the Siletz Little Food Pantry—on their property. They stock it with donated items, excess food and love.

“Many struggle at the end of the month, when food stamps run out. Or just having access to clean drinking water, if homeless,” Chipman said.

Recently the [Lincoln County Homeless Advisory Board](#) found that the number of unhoused people in the county was several times higher than previously reported, with approximately 2,000 people experiencing homelessness, about 4 percent in a population of 50,890.

For those needing help in Siletz, the Little Food Pantry is always open, day and night. The Chipmans’ grassroots solution to local food insecurity has grown into a community-supported project, offering everything from fresh vegetables to toiletries—available to anyone, no questions asked.

“Some of us are more blessed,” Chipman said. “God wants us to take care of one another.”

Throughout the year, Chipman stays connected to The Salvation Army through its food bank. Sometimes Dell’Olio provides items for the Siletz Little Food Pantry, along with ideas on securing donations for it.

“I think Michelle [Dell’Olio] and I kind of feel the same about helping people,” Chipman said. “It doesn’t matter who you are, right? It doesn’t matter if you have mental health issues or substance abuse issues or anything like that. We’re all God’s children, and we all need help from time to time.”



The Siletz Little Food Pantry. Courtesy Patricia Chipman.

Dell'Olio recalled Chipman giving a houseless man a room in her home while he got back on his feet, and connecting with a young couple who just had a baby, helping them get the support they needed to provide for their family.

“Patty has a very compassionate heart that moves her to action,” Dell'Olio said. “We invited her to join our Christmas planning committee, and she jumped right in and brought others along with her to help in every way she could.”

The group met in June and discussed how to improve the corps' Christmas activities for 2024, including the Angel Tree program.

Dell'Olio said the most significant change was expanding the ages of children served from 12 to 18, and lengthening the application period from four to six weeks. The result? The corps is serving more than 400 children this year, up from last year's 265 children.

And Chipman and Green are helping the corps do it.

For Chipman, making time to help others—despite everything she has on her plate—is worth the effort.

“Sometimes people think they have to volunteer regularly, or that an hour is not going to make a difference, but it all makes a difference,” Chipman said.

And she figures over time, any of us could find ourselves in a difficult situation, needing assistance.

“We're supposed to help out. It can give people hope,” Chipman said. “And volunteering—well, it's enjoyable. It fills your cup at the same time that you're giving. It's kind of weird how it works, but it does.”

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