

SEQUIM GAZETTE ARTICLE

Agnew Fellowship offers Little Free Pantry, hopes to grow effort in Sequim area

- By [Matthew Nash](#)
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“Take what you need; give what you can.”

That’s the motto for the new Little Free Pantry in Agnew. It’s the first of what organizers of the Olympic Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 1033 Barr Road (Port Angeles address, just west of Sequim), hope becomes many more like it in the Sequim area.

“For those involved, we’re getting as much out of it as those who take the food and other items: the feeling we did something worthwhile,” said Vicki Sensiba, chairperson for the fellowship’s Little Free Pantry.

Items are available 24/7 to anyone who comes by, organizers said. “It’s for anybody, and all ages,” Sensiba said. “We don’t need to know if they are in need or not.”

The pantry idea formed in August and it didn’t take long to receive funding and community support to build and stock the pantry, organizers said.

Support to get the project going came from the Washington State University Extension (Benji Astrachan), Compassion Clallam (Hilary Powers), volunteer carpenter Michael Clemens, Sequim Food Bank, Congregation Olympic B’nai Shalom and several churches.

“We’ve been surprised (at the amount of usage),” Sensiba said. “There hasn’t been much publicity. One day, we checked it in the afternoon, and thought it was full. We checked it the next day and it was practically all gone. Even stuff that hadn’t been very popular.”

Stocked up

While small, the pantry is stocked daily with a variety of items purchased with fellowship members’ and community members’ donations.

The pantry stocks multiple items, including food such as applesauce, canned beans, tuna, olive oil, tomato/pasta sauce, fruit snacks, rice; and toilet paper, face masks and hygiene kits (made by members of Trinity United Methodist Church). Vegetarian food options are also offered.

Pantry volunteer Susan Harris said, “there’s never been a day when something wasn’t used (and) some days many, many things are taken.”

“We have no way to track our friends who have found us, except by what’s been taken,” Harris said.

“Sometimes it was spaghetti sauce and pasta plus baby food from maybe a young family. Sometimes it’s a Nutri-grain bar and a fruit cup, and a package of utensils. Maybe that was a younger person needing an energy boost. Sometimes it’s a can of chili and a package of crackers with one of the can openers.”

Sensiba said what’s most important is “getting food to people.”

Each week, different teams stock the pantry and disinfect it on Saturdays. Volunteers include Sensiba and her husband Greg, Harris, Florence Bucierka, Dianne Whitaker, Dave Large, Ren Garypie and Margot Hewitt.

The Sensibas say one of the Universalist Fellowship’s values is social justice/equity, which they feel makes the pantry a more meaningful and helpful project.

Non-perishable food that doesn't fit in the pantry will go to other agencies, organizers said.

In its two months of operations, Greg Sensiba said they haven't seen any abuse of the pantry nor do they anticipate it in the future.

The fellowship's Little Free Library next to the pantry has seen an uptick in usage, too, organizers said.

Visitors are invited to leave comments at the pantry. Vicki Sensiba said they're important because one comment led them to stock juice boxes.

Fellowship members are aware of other pantries planned in the Sequim area, but were unaware of their current status during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We're hoping the (hunger) need will go away," Greg Sensiba said.

"For the time being, this is the starting of many free pantries in Sequim," Vicki Sensiba said.

To make a monetary donation to the Little Free Pantry, send support to: Olympic Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, P.O. Box 576, Carlsborg, WA 98234, with check subject lines stating "Little Free Pantry."

For more information, visit olympicuuf.com, email to Admin@OlympicUUF.com or call 360-417-2665.



Rotating teams from the Olympic Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, like Sequim couple Greg and Vicki Sensiba, take turns stocking

the Little Free Pantry each day. The project started two months ago, and organizers hope it's the first of many across Sequim. Sequim Gazette photo by Matthew Nash



The Little Free Library now has a new neighbor, the Little Free Pantry, in front of the the Olympic Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 1033 Barr Road. Organizers said since the pantry went in, the library has seen an uptick in usage. Sequim Gazette photo by Matthew Nash