



The Good Food Exchange



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Spotlight on Wegmans, FDN's Anchor Food Donor

Every Monday morning Phyl and Archie Brown arrive at the loading dock at the back of Ithaca's Wegmans Food Market before 10 a.m.

As volunteers with Friendship Donations Network, they must be there early to organize, sort and pack the fresh, nutritious but no longer saleable food that Wegmans donates daily to those in need in our community.

Without the efforts of the Browns and other volunteers like them every day of the week, the food would not get distributed to area food pantries and hunger relief programs throughout the Tompkins County area. And without the participation of Wegmans and other food donors there would be no food to offer to those most in need in our community.

"Wegmans staff bring out a long rack of fruits and vegetables and about four shopping carts full of breads and other baked goods," says Phyl, who is 84. "If they have it, they give it."

"We're usually there for two hours," says Arch, who is 86. "If there are any perishable dairy foods, such as yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese and butter, Wegmans staff will leave a sign saying we can get them from a cooler inside the store. They are easy to work, and they let us use their space for free and provide water so we can wash off the dock in our area when we're done."

Kelly Sharp is one of the Wegmans staff members who make sure the food gets weighed, monitored and put out on the dock seven days a week. "It benefits the community and keeps the food out of landfills. I'm quite passionate about it and have been since the start," she says.

"It's a great partnership between us and



FDN Volunteers on the dock: Archie and Phyl Brown and Meghan Beeby. *Photo: Paul Drewry*

FDN that absolutely makes a difference in the community," says Gary Woloszyn, general manager of Ithaca Wegmans and an avid community volunteer. "Robert Wegman [the food chain's pioneering past CEO] always had a philosophy that the business should support the community and if you had the opportunity to help, then you should. Wegmans Food Markets' calling in life is to feed people. We try to buy the best food and offer the best value for the price and pass it on to our customers, but we also know there are people out there who can't afford food."

He praises the tenacity and foresight of Sara Pines, who worked with Wegmans over time to develop a program to deal with what she saw as "all our community's food needs." Eventually she set up Friendship Donations Network's web of volunteers to pick up food about to be discarded at Wegmans and other area stores because it was no longer saleable by store standards, but was still healthy and edible, Woloszyn says.

"We had the resources that, with just a little effort with sorting and culling on our part, could help people who weren't able

to get help otherwise," says Woloszyn. "The program is sustainable and it makes good sense."

"Those of us at FDN are so grateful for Wegmans' contributions to the community," says Meaghan Sheehan Rosen, FDN program coordinator. "We could not function in our current capacity without the sizeable donations it makes seven days a week, 364 days a year."

The arrangement is a 'win win' situation for all involved, she says.

"Recipients benefit from fresh, free food at a time of need. Food donors gain tax write-offs for their donations; avoid hauling fees for discarded food; keep good food out of landfills; earn community goodwill for their efforts; and best of all know that their donations are going to nourish the needy in their communities."

By Linda Myers



Visit FDN at the Ithaca Alternative Gift Fair! The Fair will be held on Saturday, December 1, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church and the First Baptist Church on Dewitt Park. Bypass the annual stress of holiday shopping and accumulation of "stuff" while honoring friends and relatives with donations to causes that fit their values. Gifts start at \$5, and each gift comes with a greeting card and an insert about the organization you are supporting. More information at:

www.ithacaaltgiftfair.org



In Memoriam: Judith Schapiro Dietz

A remarkable life ended on September 17 when Judy Dietz, president of Friendship Donations Network’s board for the past three years, died of ovarian cancer at age 58.

At a memorial service for her at Temple Beth-El in Ithaca, Rabbi Scott Glass, who officiated, spoke of her glowingly.

“She was one of the finest, most decent, most caring human beings to walk the face of the earth,” he said. “She never turned her back on those in need and was the ultimate valued volunteer—the kind of person you would turn to if you wanted something done right.”

“It was evident by the crowds at Judy’s memorial service just how many organizations and people in Ithaca she has touched over the years,” said FDN vice president and treasurer Art Pearce, who worked closely with Dietz during her tenure.

“Judy will be sorely missed,” said Pearce. “She brought a remarkable com-



ination of good common sense, creative thinking, lots of energy and enthusiasm and on top of all that she was really organized. It is our good fortune that she left behind an organization that is equally well-organized,” he said, “with a good, strong board, now led by Linda Finlay, and an excellent program coordinator, Meaghan Sheehan Rosen.”

“Judy did an outstanding job as president,” said FDN founder and board member Sara Pines. Dietz helped the board develop a plan about how the organization would be run, Pines said, including such essentials as raising needed funds and tax structuring (FDN recently got its 501c3 status as a nonprofit).

“We were devastated when we heard the news about the return of her illness,” said Pines, but it didn’t stop Dietz. “She was at the board meeting in August and was still working for us from home in early September,” Pines noted. “She always did what needed to be done in the most

Friendship Donations Network

Meaghan Sheehan Rosen,
Program Coordinator

Board of Directors

Linda Finlay, President

Art Pearce, Vice-President

Michael Charnoky

Jim Eyster

Marty Hatch

Ken Finkelstein

Jane Mt. Pleasant

Lenny Nissenson

Sara Pines, Founder

David Stotz

efficient way possible, with no ego.”

Dietz was also credited by friends with having a smile that could light up a room and with being a talented tap dancer (see this YouTube video of her performance with her son, Robert: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cHdd2Vn45NE>).

FDN members mourn Dietz’s passing and extend condolences to her family. ♦

By Linda Myers

Alternatives Federal Credit Union

has selected FDN to be the RoundOff recipient for December 2012. This month, AFCU members can round down their check deposits to a whole dollar amount and donate the change to FDN. We are grateful to AFCU for this opportunity.



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