

FREE LITTLE FOOD PANTRY



RENTON COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT



FREE LITTLE LIBRARY CONVERTED

BY THE RENTON AMERICORPS VISTA TEAM

When fifth-grade teacher Jennifer Ray first found out that school was going to be out for a while, her husband said she really needed a hobby. Inspiration for this family run project came when her sister told her about someone converting a Little Free Library into a free food pantry. Jennifer and her family were already coordinating their local Little Free Library, so they decided to quickly convert it into a community pantry for her neighbors who may be having a hard time.

“We put the word out on the I Love Renton Facebook page and our neighborhood Nextdoor page and donations just started rolling in,” said Jennifer. A sanitizing and staging area has been set up in their living room just to have enough room for all of the donations.

The outpouring of support has made the neighborhood pantry a popular spot and people have been very respectful about only taking what they need. Jennifer reports that the only overzealous “shopper” was possibly a raccoon who ate up all the individually bagged dog treats.

As a Little Free Library, there was very little monitoring or maintenance involved. As a food pantry, it takes much more work, said Jennifer.

“People drop off their donations in a bin on our porch and then we wipe every single donation down with Clorox wipes”. Jennifer, her husband and 12 year old daughter all work together to make this a reality which includes taking turns to restock the pantry which can take four or five trips daily.

Jennifer said that neighbors have been so generous; some even donating bags of groceries and bulk items from Costco. It’s rewarding to see the community come together and support each other. The response has been so positive that they have had to add two more shelves for the pantry.

When asked what she needs more of, Jennifer said “Right now, we need to know what the most wanted nonperishable and household items are so we can request those for donations. We also need sanitizing wipes so we can wipe down all the food packaging before we bring it into our home for the pantry.” Jennifer Ray, her husband and 12 year old daughter are all very grateful for the positive response the little free food pantry has received as well as for the amazing response from their neighbors.

Interested in donating to the little free food pantry?
Email the Ray Family: 3rayvens@gmail.com

