

## April News from SSKP

The Shoreline Soup Kitchens & Pantries <ahollis@shorelinesoupkitchens.ccsend.com>

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Reply-To: ahollis@shorelinesoupkitchens.org

To: peggy@living-rock.org



### Latest News - April 2024

Dear Friends,

SSKP just celebrated a birthday! Our first meal was shared 35 years ago on March 25th, 1989. It was a small meal with just eleven guests. From that meal we've grown exponentially, sharing almost 2 million pounds of food last year.

Food insecurity is a reality for so many of our neighbors. Thank you for all you do to help us provide access to food and fellowship with kindness, dignity, and respect.

Below are two articles documenting the earliest days of SSKP. As we begin our 36th year, we are truly grateful to our founders who saw the needs of their neighbors, and responded so generously.

# Soup kitchen planned

## Essex church plans 1-day trial program to test need in area

By SUZANNE SATALINE  
Courant Staff Writer

ESSEX — Behind the glitter of expensive homes, high-priced boutiques and house-long yachts, members of the First Baptist Church believe, there is poverty in this little town.

The congregation has tried to convince people of that for months. But when church members asked social service departments for names of people they could help or services they could provide, the answer was nearly always the same: Essex and other area towns do not have a poverty problem.

“If the need is in our own back yard, they don't want to see it.”

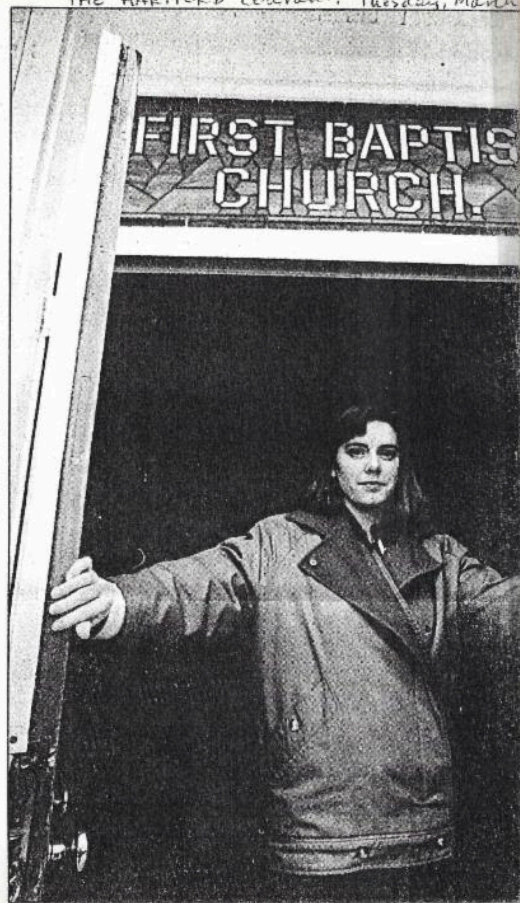
**Eleanor Susan LaPlace**  
Old Saybrook resident

So the church has decided to find out for itself how much poverty exists here, the church's minister, the Rev. Erica C. Wimber, said Monday.

March 25 from 11:30 to 1:30, the congregation plans to have a one-day soup kitchen at the church at 10 Prospect St. It is to be a pilot program to see how many people would attend a soup kitchen if there were one in the area, Wimber said.

Wimber admitted the idea of opening a soup kitchen in such a wealthy town may seem a little far-fetched to some people.

“My perception is that if anybody or something needs help in another country, it's all right,” said Eleanor Susan LaPlace, a congregation member from Old Saybrook.



Mark G...



ESSEX

### Church ladles out charity

By ERIN COX  
Staff Writer

ESSEX - The doors to the soup kitchen will reopen this Saturday because the First Baptist Church of Essex has proven that, even along the shoreline, the service is needed.

Eleven area residents ate soup and tuna sandwiches at the experimental soup kitchen held in the basement of the local church last Saturday.

Although it may seem a small number by city standards, organizers of the Shoreline Soup Cellar say it shows there are hungry people to feed.

"We had 11 people, that says there is in fact a need," the church's minister, Erica Wimber said. "It went very well and proved a point - a hard point to prove in this area."

The majority of those fed last Saturday were children according

to Wimber.

"We had seven children," she said. "Their parents dropped them off because they were embarrassed to come in."

Those who attended the trial run of the soup kitchen were residents of either Ivoryton or Old Saybrook, Wimber said.

The church opened the soup kitchen a week ago to determine how many people in this area are in need of the service.

**TO GET IN TOUCH** with those needing a hot meal, church members posted flyers in store windows, at local social services organizations and on dumpsters. However, those who came to the soup cellar didn't read the flyers.

"It was mostly word of mouth because most who came were illiterate," Wimber said.

Members of the church are going out, reaching out to those we feel are in need," Eleanor Susan La Place, a soup cellar organizer,

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said, adding, "I approached a homeless person about this week's, and he said he'd be happy to come."

La Place said it's not difficult to approach someone she feels is in need. "We trick ourselves into believing if you extend your hand, it won't be accepted because of pride, but if you get out and do it, its either yes or no," she said.

After this Saturday, soup cellar organizers will meet to decide the direction the program will take.

"It's still a pilot program," Wimber said. "We're planning to get together and organize with other churches and other people in the community."

Wimber says the soup kitchen is important because it helps to keep those in need in their home town.

"We're trying to keep them connected with the community," she said. "If they went to a large city then there is a better chance they would become homeless and hungry."

The food at the soup cellar is provided by church members. A large kettle is located at the church to accept food and monetary donations.

A ride service is offered to those needing transportation to the church. Although no one used the service last week, La Place expects many to take advantage of it this week.

La Place said no one in the community is upset about the soup cellar.

"I haven't heard anything negative from the community but if there was I'd roll with the punches," she said.

The idea of a soup kitchen needed to be brought out into the open La Place said.

"Its the first time around; Its new," she said. "We just needed someone to get off the sidelines and get it going."

## Firehouse Food Drive on Saturday, April 20th

For the 12th year, Connecticut shoreline fire departments will host a one-day food drive on Saturday, April 20th, 2024 to collect non-perishable food for SSKP from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Shoreline fire departments participating include Old Saybrook, Essex, Westbrook, North Madison, Chester, Clinton, and Killingworth, as well as Deep River (collecting food during their April 13th Lime Sale). Watch for announcements as other fire departments join in this special food drive.

Teams will be collecting donations at their firehouses or local grocery stores including Stop & Shop in Old Saybrook and Clinton, Robert's Food Market in North Madison, DG Market in Essex, and both Big Y and Walmart in Old Saybrook.

Mirsina's Restaurant, Essex Savings Bank, the Parthenon Diner, Sal's Pizza, and Scotch Plains Tavern in Essex will also be accepting nonperishable food donations prior to the event.

This incredible shoreline effort is one of our largest annual food drives - please support our fire departments on Saturday, April 20th!



Support SSKP's  
**FIRE HOUSE  
FOOD DRIVE!**  
**Sat. April 20th - 9am - 1pm**



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## **Thank You, Liberty Bank Foundation**

The Liberty Bank Foundation has generously awarded a \$5,000 grant to SSKP. These funds will purchase food that will help fill the shelves at our five food pantries.

For almost two decades Liberty Bank Foundation has provided funds for SSKP with generous grants and through special annual fund drives. We are so grateful for their continued support of our mission.



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## **Easter Baskets for SSKP**

SSKP's pantries were filled with smiles as hundreds of beautiful Easter baskets were delivered to be shared with our neighbors. They were generously provided by volunteers from the Clinton Police Department, Clinton Rotary, and countless kind and thoughtful community members who worked for several months to collect and assemble the treats. Many thanks to everyone who worked together to make these special baskets for our guests!







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## Please Support the Spring Appeal

Spring has arrived and our Spring Appeal is now underway!

We are so grateful to everyone who has already made a donation. Your gifts will help sustain us at a time of year when need remains high, but income is often low.

If you haven't supported the Spring Appeal yet, please make a gift today. You can help assure all our neighbors have access to the food they need now and throughout the year. Thank you!



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The Shoreline Soup Kitchens & Pantries | Post Office Box 804, Essex, CT 06426

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