

# KEOWEE KEY COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP (KKCP)



## Golden Corner Food Pantry

Living in Keowee Key, it's easy to lose sight of the fact that food insecurity is an issue for many of our neighbors in Oconee County. It is estimated that between 12 and 18 percent of our residents are living in poverty and have difficulty putting food on the table without assistance. Over 3,500 households qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) "food stamps." The national organization, Feeding America, said that in 2020, 11.5 percent or 9,000 people experienced food insecurity in Oconee.

Helping to address this issue for the past 37 years is the Golden Corner Food Pantry, a Keowee Key Community Partner. Founded as the Golden Corner Ministries, Golden Corner Food Pantry's mission is: To provide emergency and supplemental food to low-income residents of Oconee County.

The Golden Corner Food Pantry (GCFP) is the largest in Oconee County. As a 501(c)(3) organization, they work closely with local churches, civic organizations, and other charities in the county to identify and include needy families.

Until recently, GCFP was serving an average of just under 1,500 people per month. However, that number began to increase in March. As of early August, nearly 1,800 people are visiting the Food Pantry each month. Between 2021 and 2022 there has been a 26 percent increase in the number of Oconee County residents receiving emergency and supplemental food assistance.

About one million pounds of food is distributed annually. Depending on availability, a typical distribution includes a balanced mixture of canned food and staples, fresh breads and pastries, fruits and vegetables, frozen meats, milk, and eggs. The food comes from local donations (grocery stores, food drives), or is purchased with donated funds, primarily through Bargain Foods and Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina.

All distribution is based on need, tied to federal poverty guidelines, and verified periodically. Clients can come once a month and typically receive one to two weeks' worth of food. Their "Food for Families" Program helps individuals and families of all sizes (including single-parent families and grandparents raising grandchildren) transition through unexpected events and periods of unemployment. The "Food for Seniors" Program ensures seniors have sufficient and balanced food to improve their quality of life.

Some clients do come every month, but many come only for a few months until they get back on their feet. Others

just come a few times a year when they run into shortages or financial issues and need help feeding their family. Whether they are seniors, single mothers, families, or regular or occasional clients, one thing is the same: People say they couldn't make it without the help they get from the Golden Corner Food Pantry.

How can you help? With the growing demand for food, they really need volunteers. About 200 volunteers, including some Keowee Key members, give over 20,000 hours of their time per year. They meet with each client, collect donated food, unload, sort, store, and package the food for distribution on Monday (Food for Seniors), Tuesday through Friday (Food for Families), and the first Saturday of the month.

Your financial support is also needed to help cover their increasing operating costs, and to make up for any shortfall in food donations. Now is an especially good time to donate, since the Second Harvest Food Bank is offering GCFP exceptional deals on non-perishable staples.

It's worth noting that a remarkable 97 percent of donated funds go to program services. When you write your check to the Golden Corner Food Pantry, please remember to note: KKCP on the memo line.

## Making Sure Your Donation Counts

Keowee Key members have done a remarkable job supporting the twenty-two partners that make up the Keowee Key Community Partnership. Since its inception a little over two years ago, you have donated what is now well over one million dollars to help our less fortunate neighbors in Oconee County.

But we suspect that it's considerably higher. We know that many of us make donations to our partners, but we also know that many of us may forget to note Keowee Key or KKCP on the memo line of the check. Why this is important, is that it allows the partner to identify donations made by Keowee Key members.

The partners do not disclose who donated the money, only the cumulative donations received from Keowee Key.

Another area is donations from Charitable Trusts or matching funds from employers. If you donate through one of these means, please alert the partner to be on the lookout. They can then include these donations in their report back to the KKCP.

Thanks again to all our members for their generosity.

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Keowee Key Community Partnership (KKCP) partners with deserving, effective, nonprofit organizations that make a difference in Oconee County. These Partners record those donations from Keowee Key but report only cumulative results back to KKCP, enabling KKCP to seek matching funds. No individual donor names or donation amounts are ever shared with KKCP by Partners, and no money passes to or through KKCP.