



## CLARITY. CHOICE. EASE.

Our new online store makes preordering for curbside pickups possible  
by Alexander Léger-Small, Pantry Manager

In a world where we increasingly use technology to meet our daily needs, options are a currency. Our lives are filled with exchanges based on time, availability, interest, and need. Clients at the Northampton Survival Center deserve the opportunity to utilize the technologies of the 21st century, not only for simple convenience but out of respect for their time and their comfort.

Three words sat at the forefront of our process in creating the Survival Center's online store.

### Clarity. Choice. Ease.

The online store puts the power of choice in clients' hands. A straightforward user interface provides a way to order groceries ahead of time and choose a pickup time that works with their schedule. We opted to feature images of the front and back of each product—so just like in a grocery store, the shopper has the opportunity to make sure the product is what they *truly* want. For a client, knowing what to expect and what will be available allows for better meal planning while fostering a sense of regularity.



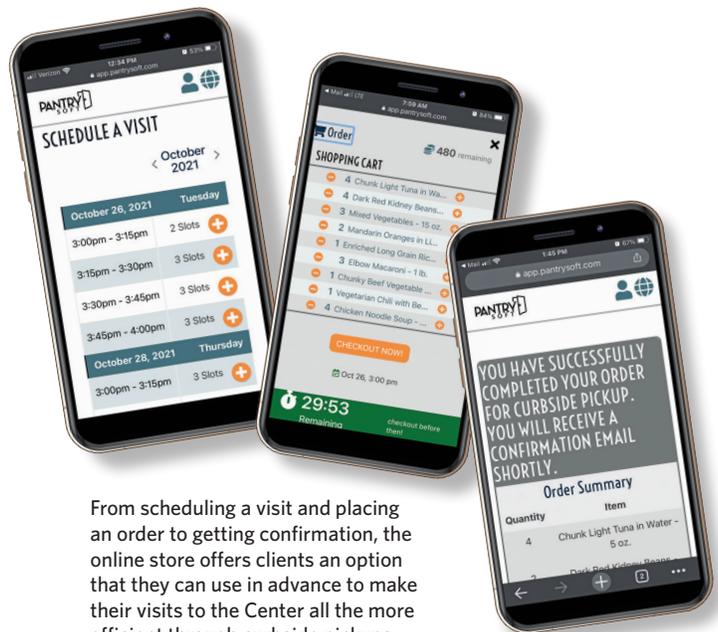
Just like in a grocery store, the shopper can see the front and back of each product in our online store before making their selection.

### New technology opens up the possibilities

In addition to our regular pantry hours at the Center, the functionality of the online store with curbside pickup has allowed us to increase our onsite distribution to five days a week. For some clients, the time it takes for an in-person visit to the Center just isn't realistic, either for themselves or for a neighbor picking up food for them.

Recognizing this and offering a different option fosters our value of respect.

As we develop this program, the potential continues to reveal itself. Can we use the online store to bring a full range of choices to our delivery program? Is this a tool that can give clients even more access and choice when it comes to fresh produce? Can we expand this to our second location in Goshen? And beyond those questions, can we broaden our engagement with our community through technologies like direct text messaging and email to help us reach more folks who need a hand with their weekly groceries? Having worked to create this online portal and store for our clients, I'm excited to say that right now the possibilities seem endless and feel exhilarating.



From scheduling a visit and placing an order to getting confirmation, the online store offers clients an option that they can use in advance to make their visits to the Center all the more efficient through curbside pickups.

“The online program really helps people in circumstances like mine. I find it difficult to keep bothering my family to take time out of their days to shop for me and my son, but now I can plan ahead for my groceries. This couldn’t have happened at a better time!” —Laura, client

“At my dental practice, we love to eat great food, and it’s important to us that all our neighbors can share that vital joy. That’s why, with every new patient, we donate a month’s worth of healthy groceries to someone in our community who would otherwise have trouble affording them.” — Dr. Aurora Fields, Refresh Valley Dental, a new business sponsor



**THE WAYS WE DISTRIBUTE FOOD:**

- Drive-through pickup
- Home deliveries
- Housing site deliveries
- Curbside pickup
- Hilltown Pantry

**EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED**

So much of our daily work comes without advance notice but adds great richness and variety to our offerings.

**THE WAYS WE GET FOOD:**

Behind the scenes, there’s an elegant dance throughout the week to order, transport, organize, and store all the food required to meet our distribution needs.

“We’re always moving things around in the fridges and freezers to fit in the unexpected, and somehow it all works out. It comes to every nook and cranny, but in the end: *‘Wow, it fit!’*”

—Carlos Rivera, Distribution Manager

**A WEEK IN THE LIFE AT THE CENTER**

Welcome to a sample week at the Northampton Survival Center. Here’s a glimpse behind the scenes of the people and processes that make it all work. It’s an alchemy of teamwork and technology, with the Center’s mission and values guiding us as we innovate.

**MONDAY**

**Drive-through pickup 2-6 pm** 

- Volunteers greet clients and assist in food selection
- Clients can pick their own produce at Abundance Farm
- Volunteers pack shelf-stable food for Tuesday home deliveries
- Center receives and organizes fresh produce for Tuesday housing site deliveries
- Shelves are restocked for Tuesday curbside pickup

Look Park donates 84 free season passes to the Center, delighting clients with a gift they’ll cherish all year.

- Center places order with Food Bank for Friday
- Volunteers pick up food at ALDI, Big Y, Stop & Shop
- Volunteers sort produce delivered from Marty’s Local
- Center receives fresh milk delivery

**TUESDAY**

**Housing site deliveries** 

- Volunteers pack shelf-stable food for Thursday
- Maps prepared, food goes out

**Curbside pickup by appointment** 

- Volunteers pack food in the morning
- Food goes out in the afternoon

**Home deliveries** 

- Volunteers pack perishables
- Volunteers deliver food
- Shelves are restocked for Wednesday drive-through pickup

Thirty cases of lasagna arrive from Rachel’s Table! The volume requires rapid and broad distribution beyond clients to other organizational partners.

- Center assesses food inventory and places orders if needed for Thursday and Friday

**WEDNESDAY**

**Drive-through pickup 12-3 pm** 

- Volunteers greet clients and assist in food selection

**Hilltown Pantry 1-3 pm** 

- Clients arrive in Goshen for drive-through food selection
- Staff call clients to arrange home delivery
- Volunteers pack and deliver food
- Staff return calls about home deliveries

- Shelves are restocked for Thursday curbside pickup

A freezer compressor fails right before the pantry is set to open, so all clients are given extra meat today!

- Volunteers pick up order at Food Bank
- Center places order with Food Bank for next Monday
- Volunteers pick up food at Big Y, Stop & Shop

**THURSDAY**

**Housing site deliveries** 

- Volunteers pack shelf-stable food for next Tuesday
- Maps prepared, food goes out

**Curbside pickup by appointment** 

- Volunteers pack food in the morning
- Food goes out in the afternoon

- Shelves are restocked for Friday and next Monday drive-through pickup

Creative juggling required, as food purchased with \$95k in CARES Act funds arrives from temporary storage.

- Center orders more produce for Friday if needed
- Center orders milk and produce for next Monday
- Volunteers receive community food donations

**FRIDAY**

**Drive-through pickup 12-3 pm** 

- Volunteers greet clients and assist in food selection
- Staff check in with clients on dietary restrictions

- Shelves are restocked for next Tuesday curbside pickup

- Staff coordinate housing site delivery details with building directors

A windfall of 1,200 pounds of fresh peaches arrives, prompting a flurry of same-day distribution planning before the weekend.

- Volunteers pick up order at Food Bank
- Center places order with Food Bank for next Wednesday
- Volunteers pick up food at Big Y, Stop & Shop
- Pig farmer comes to collect compostable waste
- Center places food order with ALDI for next Monday



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## A DYNAMIC MIX OF FORESIGHT AND FLEXIBILITY

### Managing our extraordinary crew of volunteers

by Diane Drohan, Volunteer Manager

It's Monday morning, and I'm checking emails and texts (sometimes I have to hold my breath), hoping all volunteers are in place for the day and upcoming week. Volunteers arrive, and there's lots of prep to do before we open for our drive-through clients.

I witness the hustle and bustle of retail drop-offs of bread and sweets, frozen meats, and produce from Stop & Shop and Big Y three times a week. Volunteers carefully inspect the donations and display them on our shelves. Along with Carlos and Alexander, I direct and troubleshoot anything out of the ordinary.

The van returns from the Food Bank and starts to get unloaded. A short while later, our other van arrives with the ALDI order. More volunteers appear for unloading and stocking. Before you know it, the produce delivery makes its way in the back door and gets sorted and stocked.

The personal shopper volunteers will be here soon. Time for me to tidy up their work stations and make sure they have all the info they need.

Wait, what's this? A message that a volunteer can't make it to their shift! **Who you gonna call?** More often than not, there's a volunteer willing and ready to take the plunge, but sometimes we just make it work with whoever we have present.



And so it goes throughout the week on our three drive-through distribution days.

Tuesdays and Thursdays have their own flow, as volunteers help us prepare and deliver groceries to hundreds of households around town, "packing and stacking" crates of food according to client preferences.

### Welcome changes

The past year has seen a little twist to my week. As manager of our Hilltown Pantry, I have the pleasure of doing the food ordering, menu options, van unloading, client delivery scheduling, food packing, and greeting new faces in Goshen every Wednesday. I love the interactions with our Hilltown clients!

This fall we made a huge shift to an **online volunteer management** program. It's a big help in organizing all the moving parts, which frees me up for the human interaction I love so much. Current volunteers can sign up for and remove themselves from shifts on their own. New folks interested in volunteering can sign up, fill out an application, and get oriented online before I review their interests and availability. Then I follow up via Zoom, with the hopes of welcoming them to our volunteer team!

