

LINK began as a number of congregations came together to start a food pantry for those in need. Today, LINK is comprised of a strong group of churches from different backgrounds and partners with local businesses, schools and individuals efforts to serve the emergency food needs in our community.

In 2011, LINK utilized over a thousand volunteers to serve over 2,700 families with food, clothing and toys for children. LINK has also been working with public schools in Fairfax County to distribute unused cafeteria food to families in need.

I have had the privilege of working with LINK, and its excellent leadership and volunteers, many times over the years. It is a wonderful organization and I extend my sincere appreciation and deepest gratitude to the volunteers for their many years of hard work to address the serious challenge of hunger in our community.

I submit the following article from the Herndon Patch honoring LINK's 40 years of service.

[From Herndon Patch, June 22, 2012]

LINK CELEBRATES 40 YEARS SERVING THE COMMUNITY

(By Leslie Perales)

This July LINK Against Hunger will celebrate 40 years serving the Herndon, Sterling and Ashburn area communities.

The organization began with a number of congregations combining their efforts to start a food pantry for those in need. Though it's grown and changed over the years, LINK's mission is the same: Christians linking their neighbors to food and financial assistance.

The entire LINK organization is run by volunteers. Patch sat down with three of LINK's volunteers that have spent many years serving their neighbors through the organization.

Bob Ashdown has been volunteering with the organization for about 35 years and is the food pantry manager. He picks up donations from area bakeries, grocery stores, farmers markets and even schools, and oversees the pantry.

Jim Butts is the website manager for LINK and has volunteered with the organization since before it existed. He did much of the organization's paperwork on a daily basis for a time, and helped work with the furniture mission when LINK operated one.

LINK President Lisa Lombardozzi has been working with the organization for about 15 years, beginning when she began staying home with her children. She began as a food coordinator, then worked with the food basket program.

Lombardozzi said the biggest change she's seen in her years with LINK is more involvement from the community, and how the church demographics have changed.

She said with so many area organizations that people can volunteer with, LINK has to fight a little more to stay on people's radars, but at the same time they have been able to expand and respond to the increased need in the community.

Ashdown said in the past few years, during the recession, the community has become more aware of the need and responds very well. Social networking has had a big impact on community response, he said.

When LINK was running low on food for its holiday basket program, volunteers sent out a message on Facebook and people shared the message and responded to the need, Ashdown said.

He said the holiday basket program used to have three to four dedicated volunteers packing food over two to three weeks, but

now more than 40 volunteers will come take shifts to pack the baskets.

Butts said he's seen the organization start with a food mission, add a furniture and bed mission, then eventually phase it out again. They also had a clothing mission, which eventually combined with and became The Closet, located in downtown Herndon.

LINK is unique in that it's the only organization that brings the food to its clients instead of having clients come to the pantry, Butts said. When someone in need contacts LINK, volunteers with the organization are usually able to deliver food to them within 24 to 48 hours, he said.

Butts said another unique aspect of LINK is how volunteers are able to assist stranded travelers at Dulles International Airport. He said they can respond within 24 hours to make sure they have what they need if they get stuck in the area while traveling.

Butts said in the first 25 years at LINK they had about 15 to 20 churches rotating responsibilities. Since then some have dropped out and others have joined.

Ashdown said the organization has received a lot of support from government organizations and elected officials, though none of it monetary. Local representatives hold food drives for the organization.

Lombardozzi said LINK has been consistent in its leadership, but has seen many different volunteers. A lot of volunteers come to the organization around Christmas and end up staying when they find they enjoy the work, she said.

Butts said in the near future he sees LINK working to improve communications with other area food pantries and banks. He said he's also working on one phone number for those in need of food to call so based on their location they can connect them with the closest location.

Ashdown said he enjoys getting to meet new people and work with them through LINK, and at the same time the volunteers get to share the gospel and live out Christianity.

LINK gives people the chance to be the hands and feet of Jesus, Lombardozzi said. When they serve clients they get to know them, pray with them and sometimes find other ways to help them, she said.

Lombardozzi said she likes that an organization that includes many faith backgrounds has been able to collaborate to serve their community for 40 years, working together for something they believe in.

To learn more about LINK or how to get involved, visit LINK's website here.

IN OPPOSITION OF REPRESENTATIVE BISHOP'S AMENDMENT—
H.R. 2578

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 9, 2012

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition of Representative BISHOP's amendment in H.R. 2578, the Conservation and Economic Growth Act.

This amendment would give the Department of Homeland Security unrestrained authority over more than 49 million acres of land encompassing major regions heavily populated by Latinos.

These new "operational control zones" would harm communities economically, socially, and environmentally.

DHS would be explicitly exempt from complying with dozens of environmental, public

health, and safety laws within 100 miles along the Mexican and Canadian borders.

Even Secretary Napolitano and the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol indicated that environmental protections do not hinder their ability to secure our borders.

This amendment proves to be unnecessary and a threat to our public health.

Also, it jeopardizes the natural parks and public lands that many people use as recreation across our nation.

I understand our nation faces many challenges, but this is no way to enhance border security.

We must respect the liberty of all Americans, enjoy our natural landscape, and ensure every person's right to a healthy life.

I urge my colleagues to vote against Representative BISHOP's amendment.

IN HONOR OF LOUIS A. MITCHELL

HON. PATRICK J. TIBERI

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, July 9, 2012

Mr. TIBERI. Mr. Speaker, I honor the life and work of Lou Mitchell on the occasion of his passing from this life to the next.

Lou Mitchell's connection to central Ohio reached back several generations and his roots ran deep in our community's soil. His family has lived and contributed to our area for generations. For example, his great-grandfather graduated from Dennison University after returning from his service in the Civil War.

Irrespective of his family's illustrious history, Lou strived to place his own stamp on the place that helped shape him. As a very successful businessman, he could have lived anywhere he wished. He wished to live in central Ohio. He wanted to live among people like himself—people who enjoy and respect hard work and honest dealings. He wanted to give back to the people and community that gave him an education, a career and common sense values.

Lou did give back in many ways over his life. As president of the Board of Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Central Ohio, a member of the Boards of the Ohio Historical Society Foundation and I Know I Can, and a Denison University Life Trustee, his wisdom and spirit influenced the direction and missions of these agencies. Lou gave to causes dear to his heart such as the Licking County YMCA, where the Mitchell Family YMCA Recreation Center was dedicated in 2005, his beloved Dennison University to build the Mitchell Athletic and Recreation Center in 1994, and the non-profit organization he started known as "A Call To College Program," which provides college scholarship money to Newark High School students. In addition, he privately helped countless individuals who he learned had experienced setbacks in life such as large medical bills or educational expenses beyond their means. He did not seek publicity or notoriety for these acts; he did them because he could and he believed it was right.

I offer my deepest sympathies to his family. Their sense of loss is shared by many of us who knew and loved Lou Mitchell. His legacy will stand as an example for all, and he will be dearly missed.