

Bishop Griffin Center looking for volunteers

By Tim Puet
Catholic Times Reporter

The Bishop Griffin Resource Center on Columbus' east side is looking for young adult volunteers ages 18 and older to make sure it can continue serving residents of east and southeast Columbus if its current food pantry volunteers are impacted by the coronavirus.

"We're trying to form a B-team in case our volunteers get sick," said Father David Schalk, pastor of Columbus Christ the King Church. The center is located at 2875 E. Livingston Ave., in the former Christ the King rectory.

"The people who are most engaged in the center's activities also are part of the age group in the highest risk of being affected by the virus," Father Schalk said. "We're serving many more people, with a skeleton crew of about five or six volunteers. We don't want to exhaust the helpers we have as people's needs grow at such a fast pace."

Father Schalk said the pantry at nearby Columbus St. Philip Church was forced to close after one of its volunteers contracted the virus and that the same thing had happened at another east side pantry. "We don't want to join them, so we're putting out a call for help and hope there are people willing to respond. We can get them up to speed quickly," he said.

He said that since the beginning of March, the Bishop Griffin Center pantry has served about 600 families. That's about a 25 percent increase from its usual total. It usually is a choice pantry, meaning people can choose from among a variety of items. Because of the pandemic caused by the virus, food now is being distributed in prepackaged boxes.

The pantry is open from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Wednesdays and 2 to 4:30 p.m. Fridays. It added Saturday hours of noon to 3 p.m. last week and will open at the same time this Saturday, March 28, with additional Saturday openings possible. The virus has forced the closing of its clothing store and cancellation of its other activities.

It serves people in the Columbus ZIP codes of 43209, 43213, 43219, 43227 and 43232. People coming to the center for food are asked to provide a piece of mail and some type of identification verifying they live in those areas.

Anyone wishing to volunteer at the center is asked to send an email to info@bishopgriffinresourcecenter.com.