

Angel Food Ministries Expands in PA

Angel Food Ministries, a Georgia-based food program, has landed in Pennsylvania with a flurry and a flutter. AFM began in 1994 in Monroe, Georgia. Currently its website lists 57 PA locations where the food is distributed. The foods distributed are high quality and food stamps may be utilized in the purchase. The program, now in 32 states, sells boxes of groceries (meats, fresh foods, staples, both fresh and frozen) to customers at a cost of \$25.00 per box.

Similar to the Self Help and Resource Exchange (SHARE) Food Program, which has around 100 distribution sites primarily in southeastern PA and in northern tier counties, Angel Food Ministries (AFM) achieves significant price reductions through volume purchase of a standard menu of food items. Customers must order a basic food box before ordering special sale items. Sale items might include a 4 pound steak special for \$18.00.

The program has taken West Side United Methodist Church in Clearfield by storm. Their first order required 1 ½ tractor trailers to deliver. With 1,330 basic food boxes, this 800-member church uses 70-100 volunteers each month to handle the monthly distribution. Frances Witherow of the church said, "It's an amazing program; we are excited to be part of it. It takes a lot of people, but we know we are doing God's work". Just like the SHARE program, clients place orders two weeks before the delivery date. The food arrives at a specified date and time. Volunteers unpack the trucks and prepare for distribution.

Foods available through AFM appear to be nutritionally similar to SHARE, which ships out of Philadelphia. The cost per box is higher than SHARE, perhaps reflecting the delivery from Georgia. (SHARE packages typically cost \$18 and AFM packages are \$25.) AFM's food packages come with printed Christian messages although the ministry is non-denominational, while the SHARE program requires two hours of volunteer community service as its standard membership fee.

Hunger Action has been promoting the SHARE Food Program in central Pennsylvania and continues to resource agencies that would like to establish SHARE Food Program sites. To learn more about the SHARE Food Program call 215-223-2220 or 1-800-FOOD-997. To learn more about Angel Food Ministries call 1-700-267-7015.