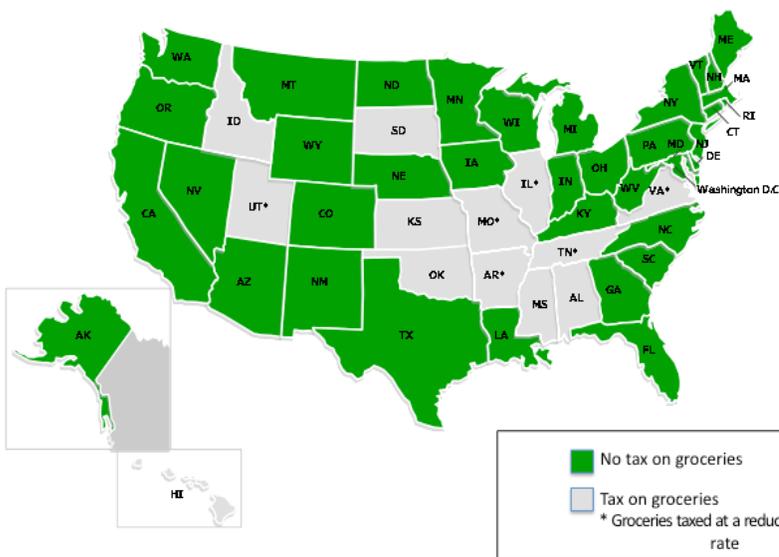


# THE ADVOCATE

Fall 2017

## Why Taxing Food Hurts Our Community

*Pastor Christine Myers-Tegeuder & Jess Roadman*



rate than the regular sales tax. There are then four states that tax food at the same rate as sales tax, but give rebates back to low income families to offset the cost per person.

Most states have realized that taxing grocery food is unethical and do just fine without the tax. Do we (Utah) want to be regressive? Putting up to \$200 each year of income back into the hands of the working poor benefits all of us. Helping the working poor financially can have all sorts of positive ripple effects, including keeping people in their homes, which should be a major concern for a city with a homeless crisis. So, Crossroads has, once again, become the voice of opposition to the food tax and will be working for its complete removal in the 2018 legislative session.

West Virginia was the most recent state to eliminate

grocery food tax in 2013. When they did, West Virginia's Governor Tomblin stated "West Virginians have been burdened by a regressive tax on one of life's basic necessities [for too long]. The elimination of the food tax allows families to keep more of their hard-earned money."

We have many reasons to not tax grocery food. The added cost forces those in poverty to decide between physical survival and a warm place to sleep in the winter, the healthcare necessary for long-term sustenance, or the transportation required to maintain steady employment.



Senator Jim Dabakis (D-District 2) has agreed to be the vocal supporter and sponsor of a bill to eliminate food tax, which will run in the Utah 2018 legislative session.

For a Christian perspective on eliminating the food tax, see page 3.

The fee for accessing air to breathe: 0%. The fee for drinking water from a fountain: 0%. The fee for eating: 3%. Although consuming food is as vital to human survival as air or water, the State of Utah imposes a sales tax on it. This is not a tax for the luxury of enjoying food prepared by someone else, but for that purchased to merely survive. Given our mostly urban landscape and predominant ownership of agriculture by large business, for most people, the grocery tax is unavoidable.

Thirty-two states and the District of Columbia do NOT tax groceries. Utah is one of six states that tax food at a lower

## Golden Celery Champions: St. Paul United Methodist Church & Murray Baptist!

Each July, faith communities throughout Utah engage in a friendly competition to see who can donate the most pounds of food per congregation attendee. This food drive is integral to our work during the summer. Crossroads experiences a simultaneous decrease in donations and increase in the number of people using our services during the summer months. This imbalance puts a real strain on our resources. Thanks to the Golden Celery competition, July 2017 saw a total donation of 16,285 pounds (compared to 5,664 pounds in June). That's 10,621 pounds of food we would not have had without the extra effort by our faith communities!

Congratulations to St. Paul United Methodist Church and Murray Baptist on their first-place tie!! Thank you to Christ United Methodist Church, who donated the most total pounds (3,464)! We appreciate everyone who participated for their hard work and dedication to our services:





*Crossroads Urban Center staff*

## Crossroads Satellite Food Pantry Expected to Open in October

We are excited to announce the Fall opening of a second food pantry, which will be located in the Poplar Grove neighborhood of Salt Lake City. The Poplar Grove neighborhood was identified by the USDA as a food desert - an area in which people do not have nearby access to healthy foods. We hope to fill that gap. Both our new pantry and downtown location will offer food and other services for housed and homeless visitors. Information will be added to our website and social media as details are confirmed.

## Making Hunger Visible: The Big H

*Lane Gardinier*

For years, the Anti Hunger Action Committee (AHAC) has been speaking up about issues that affect low income Utahns. We participate in rallies, protests and legislative sessions - always working to find solutions. This past legislative session, a bill to raise the food tax prompted AHAC to take a careful look at the way in which those in poverty are negatively affected by a tax on groceries. AHAC decided that it was important to make hunger visible because people don't realize where hunger is and who it affects: too many places and too many people.

In response, the group created a giant, sandwich board 'H' that shows up at healthcare rallies, public tai chi classes, the Meet the Candidates BBQ in Liberty Park, Utah Tax Payer's Association meetings, and the Utah Capitol. Everywhere it goes, the H generates attention and questions for which AHAC members are ready with hunger and food tax education resource handouts. Hunger is all around us - the more the 'H', and all of us, can make it visible, the harder it is to ignore.



AHAC is dedicated to reducing hunger and finding solutions to the problems that reinforce hunger and poverty. If you are also concerned about hunger in our community, please join us! Contact Bill Germundson at (801) 364-7765 for more information or to be a part of AHAC.

## Volunteer Spotlights: Carol Burnison and Dorothy Crockett

Two of our most beloved and loyal volunteers will soon be embarking on new adventures. Although we are heartbroken that our staff and those visiting our pantry will no longer see them weekly, we are excited for the next step in their journeys.



*Carol & Pat Burnison*

**Carol Burnison** has been part of the Crossroads family for nearly 20 years. At 85 years old, Carol is still active in unloading donations, moving boxes, and carrying out any task that needs to be done. He also serves as the liaison between Hilltop United Methodist Church and Crossroads, maintaining a monthly donation drive and, until recently, transported all food and clothing to our pantry and thrift store until recently. He treats each person visiting our pantry with warmth, esteem and respect.

**Dorothy Crockett** came to Crossroads four years ago after retiring from a career of helping others in healthcare and education. She serves in the often difficult role of staffing the front desk, where she is the first person to interact with those seeking our services. Dorothy offers a smile and authentic sympathy as our visitors share the infuriating and heartbreaking stories of life in poverty. She is the epitome of kindness and care spread equally to all those who pass through the pantry's doors.

Thank you, Carol and Dorothy, for your exceptional dedication to Crossroads' visitors, staff, and volunteers. The joy you have brought to our community is immeasurable and you will truly be missed. We wish you overwhelming happiness and peace in your next adventures!



*Dorothy at the front desk*

## Building Renovations

Thanks to a substantial grant from the United Methodist Women, Crossroads' pantry received some needed upgrades. Built in 1905, the structure boasts beautiful intricate woodwork and looks much the same as in this 1909 photo. However, given Salt Lake City's positioning on the Wasatch Fault, improvements were necessary to reinforce the building's structural integrity. Our deepest gratitude to the United Methodist Women for providing the funds to complete this work.



### THE ADVOCATE

*is a periodic publication of Crossroads Urban Center*

#### Our Mission

Crossroads is a nonprofit, grassroots organization that assists and organizes Utahns with low incomes, those with disabilities, and people of color to meet basic survival needs and to address essential issues affecting quality of life.

#### Credits

Board Chair: Scott Patton  
Executive Director: Glenn Bailey  
Newsletter Editor and Layout: Jess Roadman

## Let's Really Talk About Homelessness

### Low wages and high rents:

*The basic math behind family housing crises*

**\$968** Take home monthly pay for a full-time minimum wage worker.

**- \$887** Median Utah rent in 2015.

**\$81** What is left for phone, utilities, healthcare, food, clothing and childcare.

#### Facts about low wages in Utah

- Full-time minimum wage annual income: **\$14,616**
- 78,000+ Utah households **earn less than \$15,000** per year.
- The minimum wage has been **\$7.25/hour** since **2009**. If it had been adjusted for inflation every year it would now be \$8.34.
- Minimum wage for tipped employees has been **\$2.13** since **1991**.

#### Facts about rent in Utah

- Salt Lake County loses over 1,000 affordable apartments/year.
- Between 2005 and 2015 the number of apartments in Salt Lake County that cost \$800 per month or less (2015 dollars) decreased by over **10,000**.
- **55,618** low-income Utah households spend **more than 30 percent** of their total income on rent.

#### It's simple math:

**Low wages + high rents = Homelessness**

As Salt Lake City residents are well aware, local government has launched several new projects to “deal” with homelessness. While the full implementation and outcomes of these projects are yet to be seen, we call upon the Mayor, the City Council, and other decision-makers to focus, not on eradicating “the homeless” from our streets, but instead on lifting burdens off of the real people for whom homelessness is their current experience. Smaller shelters, realignment of services, and law enforcement “sweeps” will fail if low-income housing doesn't exist in our community. Join us in calling on our elected representatives to make low-income housing the priority it needs to be to truly address homelessness.

Talk to local leaders at our upcoming Salt Lake City Council candidate forums:

- District 3: Sept 6, 12PM-1PM, 27 C St.
- District 5: Sept 14, 12PM-1PM, 1710 Foothill Dr.
- District 7: Sept 21, 12PM-1PM, 1740 S 500 East

For more information/opportunities hosted by our Coalition of Religious Communities, follow us on Facebook or Twitter (p. 4).



*Two volunteers from Molina Healthcare*



*First Presbyterian Church of SLC Youth Group*



*Volunteer group from Fresh Life Church*



*Lodge family reunion*

## Our Amazing Summer Work Groups

Our volunteer groups are amazing! This year, they gathered and transported food, cleaned our pantry, and provided the hands necessary to pull off our events. To highlight just a few:

- Vans Warped Tour did a food drive for the second year in a row (3,939.1 pounds of food). Volunteers from Fresh Life Church helped load and transport the donations.
- The First Presbyterian Church youth group donates their time monthly to help in any activities we need.
- Molina Health Care provided financial donations, volunteer groups, & sponsored our annual Meet the Candidates barbecue.
- Mission groups from Lakewood United Methodist Church (Lakewood, CO), Calvary United Methodist Church (Colorado Springs, CO), the Lodge Family as part of their family reunion and the students from the SOAR II program helped us with a variety of projects at the pantry and store.

## CORC spotlight: Food Tax

*Pastor Christine Myers-Tegeger*

Most people would agree that helping people who are poor or in need is a “good thing.” Most of us like to feel like we are being “good.” But for religions that are based on the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, caring for those in need is a command from God and the way society was set up from the beginning.

Check out this passage from Deuteronomy 24:19-22:

*19 When you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. 20 When you beat the olives from your trees, do not go over*

*the branches a second time. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. 21 When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow. 22 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command you to do this.*

This passage makes several things clear. One, we are expected to harvest crops we have worked on and benefit from them. In other words, we are allowed to have profitable business. But two, we are not to be greedy. When we have what we need, we should purposefully leave some for those that need it at no charge. Notice we are to do this on purpose, not by accident.

And third, we do this because any one of us could find ourselves in need as well, just as Israel had been in Egypt.

So, since the early establishment of society thousands of years ago, we were meant to help those in need when it comes to the basic provision of food. And this is still the case today. This is why we have food pantries and food stamps. But if food is a basic necessity that we are commanded to help provide for those who are poor, why would we tax it when the working poor are trying to buy food? Notice in Deuteronomy the poor are allowed to collect food free of charge. They are not then taxed on it. Let's be obedient, responsible, and smart. Let's eliminate the food tax.

Visit Us Online!



/crossroadsurbancenter



@crossroadsurban

www.crossroadsurbancenter.org

Upcoming Events:

Wine & Cheese Benefit Party - Sept. 17th @ The Bayou  
 Open House & Volunteer Awards - Oct. 19th @ Crossroads' food pantry



The 2017 Crossroads Urban Center Board of Directors

*"On behalf of the Board, I would like to sincerely thank you for your continued support. The challenges of providing basic services to those in need and confronting the root causes of poverty are ever present. Your ongoing support is vital to Crossroads' mission of assisting low-income, disabled, and minority Utahns with addressing the issues affecting their quality of life. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your kindness and compassion."*

- Scott Patton, Board Chair



ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED



NEEDS LIST

The following is a list of things we need most at Crossroads Urban Center. Donations of food, clothing, household goods, time, and money are needed on an ongoing basis.

**Pantry Needs**

- Canned goods, peanut butter, or dry foods (ex. beans, rice, cereal, mac & cheese, boxed meals, powdered/canned milk, saltine crackers).
- Travel-size shampoo, soap, lotion, etc.
- Large size shampoo and lotion
- Razors
- Toothpaste and brushes
- Toilet paper
- Deodorant
- Feminine hygiene products: pads and tampons
- Diapers (esp. sizes 5, 6, and Pull Ups)
- Baby formula

Pantry:  
 347 South 400 East  
 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
 Mon. - Fri.  
 (801) 364.7765

Thrift Store:  
 1385 W Indiana Ave. (850 S)  
 10:00 AM - 6:30 PM  
 Tues. - Fri.  
 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
 Saturday  
 (801) 359.8837

**Thrift**

- Kids' clothes
- Women's clothing (esp. large sizes)
- Men's clothing
- Shoes, work boots, and socks
- Jackets and coats
- Underwear (new)
- Jeans and work pants
- Blankets, towels, and sheets
- Dishes and silverware
- Pots, pans, and crock pots
- Small appliances
- Household goods
- No furniture, please.

**Please drop off pantry and thrift donations during business hours only!**

For more ways to get involved at our Pantry or Thrift Store, please contact Jess Roadman at Crossroads Urban Center at (801) 364-7765 ext. 110