



Mariette Facques

HISTORY OF SHARE

In 1979 I was elected to the parish council of St. Patrick Church and asked to look into how the parish might better serve the community. At the time no outreach program for families in need existed, so I started a Food Pantry and a Clothing Barn. A decision was made at that time to serve Milford, Amherst, Mont Vernon, and Brookline, the towns served by St. Patrick Church. The Food Pantry was a very small closet in the church hall with no way to keep perishable foods. The Clothing Barn was literally a barn, with no heat and spaces between the boards through which one could see outside. SHARE used these facilities with no charge. It became apparent very quickly that there was a need for a financial assistance program, as people, whose electricity had been shut off or who were about to be evicted, were coming for food. SHARE started with \$50 and began the quest for financial contributions

In 1986 the SHARE Resource Committee was formed to increase the awareness of SHARE in the local area and to raise funds. All the area churches were invited to participate. A dedicated group worked many hours with me to set up a business plan and financial plan in order to give the program some organization and assure its continuity into the future.

In 1986 the Food Pantry was expanded and moved from the closet in the basement of the church to a much larger facility in the basement of St. Patrick Center. At this time a refrigerator and a freezer were donated to the pantry, enabling SHARE to give perishables to its recipients. A short time later, the barn was renovated. The walls were insulated, the ceiling was lowered, a new floor, new lighting and a gas heater were installed, as well as a small sorting room. Around that time SHARE was given an office, rent-free, in St. Patrick Center. In September of 2008 SHARE purchased the Knights of Columbus building located at 1 Columbus Avenue in Milford. In January of 2009 SHARE officially moved into its new home. Renovations created a comfortable reception area, two private offices where SHARE staff could meet with clients and an expanded Food Pantry. The Clothing Barn remained on St. Patrick Church property. In 2014 SHARE added to their existing building, enlarging their food pantry, adding offices so that Milford Town Welfare and the Fuel Assistance program were able to join them.

In September of 2009 Chris Janson was hired as Executive Director of SHARE, bringing about many changes to refine many aspects of the SHARE program to make them more businesslike, accountable, and to assure the continuity of the program.

In 2017, the SHARE Program, which started with \$50 was able to spend close to one million dollars on area families in need. Written by Mariette Facques, Founder of SHARE