



Community-owned food markets open to everyone.

Search

Weavers Way Power Outage Helps Feed Hungry in Philadelphia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PHILADELPHIA, Nov. 30, 2015 — Bad luck for Weavers Way generated some good fortune for area food banks Monday, as a power outage that darkened the main Co-op store in Chestnut Hill prompted the giveaway of thousands of dollars worth of food that would otherwise have gone to waste.

Power went out at the 8424 Germantown Ave. location of the Northwest Philadelphia cooperative grocery about 4:15 a.m., according to General Manager Jon Roesser, who spent much of the day working with staffers to transport perishables into temporary storage and into the hands of local outfits that redistribute food to the needy.

Co-op staffers scrambled to get produce, meat, seafood and dairy trucked to refrigerated storage at the Weavers Way warehouse in Nicetown and packed into the still-cold walk-ins in Chestnut Hill. With a load of dry ice, Roesser reported that temperatures were holding in the Chestnut Hill coolers.

That left frozen food and products already out in the prepared foods cases to be given to the food pantries.

“We immediately got on the phone with our friends at Philabundance and they got on the phone with their friends who have food pantries,” Roesser said. “Basically, a dozen people dropped everything to come over here and get what we had before it went bad.”

As Therman Keel and Kenneth Cooper loaded boxes of frozen vegetables into a van,

Keel explained that their food bank, at Grace Tabernacle Christian Church in Southwest Philadelphia, has plenty of storage capacity. “But this will all be gone by this afternoon,” Keel said, chuckling.

Volunteers from Face to Face Germantown, who visit the Chestnut Hill store almost daily to collect bread, produce, prepared food and meat that otherwise would be discarded, also found themselves boxing up frozen food. Tom Laughlin and Bob Rossman were driving it immediately to St. Vincent’s Roman Catholic Church in Germantown for use in its soup kitchen.

Other beneficiaries were the Food Cupboard (Loaves and Fishes) at Jenkintown United Methodist Church, 2 Fish 5 Loaves Food Ministry at Upper Room Missionary Baptist Church in West Oak Lane and the food pantry at the Philadelphia Housing Authority’s Oxford Village in Lawndale.

Roesser said he and his team have been working on a backup generator strategy for both stores since a major outage in Chestnut Hill in August. “We said let’s get the ball rolling, and we’ve actually been making progress — we had a structural engineer in the week before Thanksgiving and we have solicited bids,” said Roesser.

The August outage, which resulted in the loss of all perishable product in the Chestnut Hill store, was the result of a PECO error, but as of Monday afternoon, the cause of the latest outage was still unknown.

PECO spokesman Greg Smore said the utility had determined the problem was “an underground equipment issue” isolated to the immediate area of the store. An excavating crew was on site and Smore said the work was expected to go on into Monday night.

Roesser estimated the value of the donated food at \$6,000-\$7,000. Monday sales in the Chestnut Hill store have been averaging more than \$30,000, according to Weavers Way Finance Manager Susan Beetle.

About Weavers Way: With stores in Mt. Airy and Chestnut Hill, the Co-op is member-owned, open to the public and committed to offering quality products that are local, sustainable and nutritious. For more information, visit www.weaversway.coop (<http://weaverswayco-op.createsend1.com/t/t-l-ihhdhdl-l-m/>).

###

