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COLTS to collect food for pantry

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The County of Lackawanna Transit System will be taking food donations every Thursday until Thanksgiving.

COLTS is accepting non-perishable food items for the fifth year as part of its annual food drive for Friends of the Poor. Riders can donate things like canned goods, pasta and cereal, Gretchen Wintermantel, COLTS communication director, said. Glass jars will not be accepted.

Last year COLTS collected close to 200 pounds of food, Ms. Wintermantel said. "Every little bit helps," she said. "If we can help even just a few families, we're hap-

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Executive director, Friends of the Poor

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Collection dates are Oct. 30, Nov. 6, Nov. 13 and Nov. 20. Every COLTS bus will have a plastic bin near the front for donations. Food can also be brought to the COLTS office at 800 North South Road or directly to Friends of the Poor, 148 Meridian Ave. Sister Ann Walsh I.H.M., executive director of

Friends of the Poor, said the need is growing. On Friday, the organization provided food to 70 to 80 families. One day last week, close to 100 families stopped at the food pantry. In addition to the food pantry, the charity also provides snacks for more than 30 children who daily stop at the food pantry after school. Friends of the Poor tries to

provide balanced meals to families, giving them meat, fruits and vegetables and pasta whenever supplies are available. During the week of Thanksgiving, the nonprofit will provide food to more than 3,000 families. At Christmas, they will help another 1,500 families, she said.

Recently Sister Walsh said there's been an increase in the number people seeking help.

"It's getting hard for me to believe," she said. "It seems the middle class is flipping and becoming the working poor, so they come to us to help put food on table."

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