



Photo submitted  
**Director Holly Neal recently celebrated her 20th anniversary with United Fund of Cumberland County.**

# UF holds meeting at Homestead Community Food Pantry

Cathy Tipton and Gail Zydlewski with the Homestead Community Food Pantry hosted the second quarterly board meeting of the Cumberland County United Fund April 9. The food pantry, housed in the Homestead United Methodist Church, is one of 35 partner agencies that receive funding grants from the United Fund. At the beginning of the meeting, Tipton and Zydlewski shared that more than 130 individuals and families line up bright and early the second Saturday of each month for a week's worth of groceries that includes staples like canned goods, dried beans along with much needed hygiene items and toilet tissue. They invited the board and guests to join them at the close of the meeting for a tour of the pantry facility and see first hand the preparation undertaken for the next day.

Board President Jennifer Thompson welcomed the 11 board members and guests who attended in-person and virtually that evening at the food pantry. She and VP Allison Brendel shared some of the awareness activities including the radio appearances and visits to various businesses they participated in during the past quarter.

Board member Mark Baldwin talked about the upcoming Bigfoot Festival slated for Oct. 16 here in Cumberland County. The United Fund will benefit from the proceeds from the first ever Upper Cumberland event that is expected to draw upward to 20,000 visitors to enjoy the great outdoor Biefoot



**Board member Danny Hassler his wife, Kim, help organize canned goods at the Homestead Community Food Pantry.**

themed activities planned for the 2021 festival. Baldwin encouraged us save the date, visit the Bigfoot website and help promote the big event.

Executive Director Holly Neal announced that the United Fund will once again be participating in the Big Pay Back fundraiser to culminate May 6 via social media. Christy Dolinich will chair the 11th Annual United Fund Golf Tournament slated for Aug. 21 at Dorchester Golf Club in Fairfield Glade. Neal reminded the board that we as board members are to be the "hands and mouth" in order promote and execute all the activities in which the United Fund benefits is involved with including getting sponsors, securing teams and prizes for the golf tournament.

Past Co-President Amanda Elmore shared details of Holly Neal's 20th recent annual performance review conducted that contained input from all board members this year. Much to Holly's surprise, during Elmore's

presentation, in walked Holly's family including husband Randy and her youngest daughter Joanna with her family Josh, Lilly and Claudia Newberry. That's when the performance review discussion became a full-blown celebration of Holly's 20th anniversary with the United Fund. Neal is the third and only woman executive director in the organization's 55-year history. County Judge Mark Tucker was the first ED followed by Glenn S. Miller who served for 30-plus years and was often dubbed Mr. United Fund.

With 20 years in, Neal has rightfully earned the affectionate title of Mrs. United Fund for her leadership, dedication and commitment to the community and the organization. Glenda Bond reminded us in the song "Oh By Gosh, By Golly, It's Time to Celebrate Mrs. Holly!" that Bond wrote and rapped with the board chorus accompanied by Ann Looney on the accordion. The song, patterned after the familiar "Oh By

Gosh, By Golly" holiday tune, stated that Holly is first and foremost a Neal! Bond, who is Miller's daughter, dared Holly to break Mr. Miller's 30-year record with the organization and still be able to retire before she is 88 like Miller did! The board also marked the occasion in gifting Neal with a basket filled with many her favorite things selected for her own personal enjoyment.

The United Fund is so thankful to have had Mrs. Neal at the helm leading us in the 21st century challenges of the COVID-19 era and technological advances she has put in place during her tenure. Always gracious and humble to a fault, Mrs. Neal was (almost) utterly speechless throughout the surprise celebration.

Following the board meeting, eight board members — Allison Brendel, Tiffany Atkinson, Amanda Elmore, Nancy Hyder, Flory Dunnigan, Glenda Bond, Sara Drake and Danny Hassler and his wife Kim, along with ED Holly Neal and her granddaughter, Lily Newberry, joined the volunteers from Homestead and Dorton UMC to open boxes and organize canned goods and staples purchased through the Second Harvest Food Bank and the pack up the groceries in preparation for pick up the next day. Once again, the board and volunteers were evidence of the United Fund motto, "Neighbors Helping Neighbors."

To learn more about the United Fund and how to get involved, visit [www.cumberlandunitedfund.org](http://www.cumberlandunitedfund.org) or call 931-484-4082.