Like The Food Shelf On Facebook

By Diana Brown
For The Woodstock Community Food Shelf

Remember back when Irene was imminent and you were wondering how long power and phone would stay connected? Somewhere in the midst of the storm, we here in Woodstock, and in Bridgewater and Reading, were cut off from not only power and phone, but fresh water, cell service, and each other. Social media helped to save the day. If one could get an Internet connection, you could go on Facebook, and maybe get email exchanges going. VTans quickly put up a remarkable site, with up-to-the-minute vital highway info, the governor posted on Twitter as he traveled by helicopter, while the newly created Facebook page Woodstock VT Flood Relief followed the lead of Vermont Strong.

Nonprofits Sustainable Woodstock and the Woodstock Community Food Shelf partnered with the town and the Woodstock VT Flood Response to serve meals, and handle information, and find resources with ease and efficiency only available with the sharing of data in real-time as provided by social media.

That was the beginning of something new for many groups which prior to Irene had always relied on this newspaper, word of mouth, and file cabinets for communication and data storage. Over the past two years nonprofits here and elsewhere in Vermont have struggled to get wired for the benefit of those they serve and to assist in the smooth operation of their organizations. Post-Irene they have realized the great wisdom of staying connected, but as non-digital natives (let’s face it: our kids are the ones who really know this stuff) and limited budgets, getting the right fit has not been easy.

Enter The Vermont Digital Project in the person of Rob Fish and his talented crew of volunteers. In their own words: Created by Vermont Community Rural Development, with the goal of constructing more resilient communities after the 2011 floods, the Vermont Digital Economy Project is a continuation and expansion of the work performed by e-Vermont. This Project offers free support that will speed food recovery, spur economic development and job growth, and improve community resilience to disasters. The project will deliver the following to small towns across Vermont: We will help nonprofits work to improve performance, use the cloud, build or market online delivery of services, and develop disaster preparedness systems.

Rob who graduated from UVM, is our digital super hero. I really think he has a cool cape somewhere — but his actual official moniker is Nonprofit Advisor and Community Organizer. He came to Woodstock director Jacqueline Fischer.

We here at the Food Shelf echo Jacqueline’s comments, and thank Rob and his techie volunteers for their invaluable and excellent help.

The needs are not new here in Woodstock, but the ways to be in touch and find out about helpful programs seems like something new under the sun for many of us. So, please, if you have a computer, or use one at the library, visit the following. These new cyber connections will enable the public to find out about upcoming food drives, current needs for our guests, special events, and even ways to donate electronically. Our website address is woodstockfoodshelf.org.

The blog is woodstockfoodshelf.wordpress.com. If you are on Facebook go to Woodstock Community Food Shelf. Please “like” us.

Please note that the Change the World Kids have rescheduled its Root Cellar Celebration to this Sunday Oct. 13, at the Woodstock Elementary School from 2-4 in the afternoon. There will be music, food, and tours of the site.

Also coming up in November a Food Drive, and a dinner on Thursday the 7th, sponsored by Angkor Wat Restaurant of Woodstock and Woodstock Girl Scout Troop 42059 to benefit the Food Shelf. Watch for details.

Current needs at the food shelf are baked beans, canned soups and stews (low sodium is a good choice), fresh winterkeeping vegetables, eating apples (we have a great source of cooking apples), hot and cold cereal, canned fish and meat.

Donations of food and cash are always welcome. (If you send a check, please mail it to Woodstock Community Food Shelf, PO Box 570, Woodstock, VT 05091.) Food can be dropped off Monday from 4 to 6 p.m., Wednesday noon to 2 p.m., and Saturday 10 a.m. to noon. Lynne Davenport, owner of Yankee Exchange Consignment (the food shelf’s neighbor) will accept donations at her store during her business hours. Food can also be dropped off at locations around Woodstock including Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Church, the Christian Science Church (when the flag is out), the Congregational Church, Lake Sunapee Bank, the Unitarian Universalist Church, St. James Episcopal Church and the Woodstock Area Jewish Congregation Shir Shalom. Donations may also be dropped off at Teago Store in Pomfret. To contact the food shelf, call (802) 457-1185.