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House of Hope pantry settles into larger digs

By Amelia Buragas
 Correspondent for The Capital Times
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House of Hope, a local Christian outreach organization that runs a weekly food pantry, reopened its doors last week after closing for three weeks while it moved to a new home.

About 75 needy families from Madison celebrated the church's reopening at 2823 Index Road on Friday. The food pantry was open and well-stocked and a live band played as the families ate a home-cooked meal prepared by volunteers. It was a typical Friday night at House of Hope and both a triumph and a relief for co-pastors Stuart and Brenda Click.


"Our first night went very smoothly," Brenda Click said. "It went very well."

Click says House of Hope's previous location, 1017 Applegate Road, was sold in July and they had until Sept. 15 to find and move into a new location. They quickly found a suitable location a few blocks down the road, but it took several weeks for them to get the funds together to sign the lease. Click admits that although she never lost confidence, she did get a bit nervous.

The previous tenant's lease ran out on Aug. 31, so the Clicks moved on an accelerated schedule, with roughly two weeks to prepare the new location and move their entire operation.

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The warehouse space was cleaned, then the interior was covered with 300 gallons of white paint. They also put in new wiring and plumbing to accommodate a kitchen that feeds an average of 200 people per week.

"We had so many things going on at once it was crazy," Brenda Click said.

The entire move was made possible, she said, by people and businesses that volunteered their time and supplies. Two Men and a Truck, for example, donated a 24-foot truck for the church to use for two days. With 200 pallets of equipment and supplies, Click said the truck "made all the difference in the world."

Click said the building still looks like a warehouse, "but it looks nice and clean" and it is nearly twice as large as their previous location.

In addition to the weekly food pantry, House of Hope runs mobile food trucks in

collaboration with Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin. The trucks stop at Northport Drive, Lincoln Elementary School and Allied Drive and service was uninterrupted by the move.

The larger space will allow House of Hope to expand the programs and services it offers. Already there is one new program; it now sells used appliances such as refrigerators, stoves, washers and dryers for about \$50 each. The appliances were donated to the church and Click said the proceeds will help pay utility bills.

There are also plans to start youth programs, such as a computer lab and music and dance lessons. For the moment, though, Click hopes to take it easy and savor a smooth transition.

"I'm going to take it a little bit slower for the next couple of weeks and catch my breath," she said. "It's been quite a ride."

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