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By 10:30 a.m. mostly empty shelves await for the needy.

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Food pantries: donations low, needs grow

Demand for food is up by 40 percent

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Andrea Lypka/ MyFoxTampaBay.com

INDIAN ROCKS BEACH - At 9 a.m., at the Beach Community Food Pantry in Indian Rocks Beach, about 15 people waited in line.

They are people who have lost jobs, or have run out of unemployment – and all need food. By 10:30 a.m., most of the food was gone.

"We have peanut butter and peanut butter," said volunteer Nancy Hanna. "All the food we get, it's gone for the day."

Donations are down, but the needs are up at many local non-profit organizations like the Beach Community pantry, where they say demand is up by 40 percent from 2006.

Volunteers there don't turn anybody away. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays when the community food bank is open, the lines get longer.

One of the people in line is Marie Johnson. She comes to the organization twice a month to pick up the basics for herself and for other people in her neighborhood who don't have transportation.

"Even though I am needy, I always help others," she said.

The people in line say they have learned to stretch the food they buy for weeks. Johnson arrived in time to choose between two tuna cans and a pack of hot dogs she can take home.

"It helps me," she said. "It may not be whole lot, but it helps me get by. I am happy there are people out there who help the needy."