Millbrook Library Community Refrigerator Policy

The Millbrook Library Community Refrigerator is intended to be a local resource to provide much-needed fresh food to those in need on a neighborhood level. This project aims to promote equal access to healthy, fresh food, reduce waste and develop strong community ties. This is a joint program coordinated with the Millbrook Rotary.

The Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act was created to encourage food donations to nonprofit organizations by minimizing the liability of interested parties. The law also made it easier to donate apparently wholesome food by limiting donor liability to instances of gross negligence or intentional misconduct.

New York law provides protection from civil and criminal liability to good-faith donors who donate any canned or perishable food, farm product, game, or wild game to a charitable or nonprofit organization for free distribution.

Responsibilities:
The Millbrook Rotary will be the charitable entity behind the fridge, and donations can be made through their organization. The Rotary will also be responsible for maintaining a schedule of community organizations that will clean and check the refrigerator on a regular basis.

The Millbrook Library will be responsible for refrigerator maintenance and assisting local businesses, organizations, and individuals who volunteer time or resources on this project. The library will also be responsible for keeping updated signage and instructions on or near the refrigerator.

Monitoring and Cleaning procedure
The monitoring and cleaning procedure will be performed by the scheduled volunteer or volunteer organization.

  Monitoring procedure:
  - Perform regular checks on the community fridge, eliminating items that are no longer suitable for consumption or don’t fit donation rules. The volunteer shall make reasonable efforts to determine whether the items are no longer suitable for consumption or do not fit donation rules.
  - Recommended monitoring frequency: once a day or as needed.

  Cleaning procedure:
  - Wash the fridge with warm soapy water and rinse it with clean water.
  - Recommended cleaning frequency: once a week or as needed.
Donations:
Local businesses, organizations, and individuals may donate food whenever the library is open. In order for food to be accepted:

- All ingredients and allergens must be labeled.
- All items must be labeled with an expiration date.
- No items past their “Best Before” date.
- No opened or partially eaten items.
- No medicines.
- No alcohol or illicit substances.

The types of food accepted are as follows:

- Fruits and vegetables.
- Water, juice, and non-alcoholic drinks.
- Ready-to-eat meals—many people need food that can be eaten as-is.
- Single-serve containers (preferably microwave safe) / mason jars.
- Bread and baked goods—all bread/baked goods must be kept inside the fridge.
- All pantry items must be non-perishable and dry (canned goods, pasta, rice, sugar, flour).
- Commercially packaged meals
- Dairy and dairy alternatives.
- Plant-based meat alternatives.
- Home-Cooked Meals (labeled)
  - All donations of home-cooked meals must be labeled with the donation date and description of a food item, including a list of allergens.

Using the Refrigerator:

- Anyone may take food from the refrigerator, no questions asked.
- No paperwork is necessary to take food from the refrigerator.
- The refrigerator can be accessed during regular library hours.

Approved by the Millbrook Library Board of Trustees on March 21, 2023.