Oven-roasted turkey and homemade pumpkin pie are hallmarks of the season, but a different kind of tradition has unfolded over the years at Brooks Chiropractic & Wellness Clinic in Port Washington.

For three decades, Phillip Brooks, a doctor of chiropractic since 1975, and his staff have been conducting month-long food drives in anticipation of Thanksgiving.

During November, new patients can get a free consultation, examination and X-ray for donating nonperishable food items. Existing patients will be entered in a drawing for a free one-hour massage by contributing to the collection.

According to Brooks, the annual collection has netted more than 25,000 pounds of food — an average of 750 pounds a year.

The food is distributed to the Food Pantry in Port Washington.

“It is something we actually started 35 years ago, raising money for the Make A Wish Foundation,” Brooks said.

“When they got to be so big, we decided we wanted our donations to support a local cause and we picked the Food Pantry.”

He said the collection has been popular with patients and people in the community.

“The response has been great, and there is so much support we at times have held a collection in summer, too. You think of feeding the hungry during the holidays, but we all know people have to eat throughout the year,” Brooks said.

He said many of those contributing to the collection don’t ask about the free health services, they just drop off food.

Brooks said it’s important the clinic take a supportive role in the community, and he would welcome any other business that follows its lead and holds similar food drives.

“Everyone is welcome to do it,” Brooks said.

He said the clinic has also been a supporter of the annual Thanksgiving meal served at Nisleit’s Country Inn in the Town of Port Washington, buying the turkeys that are served to people who

have nowhere else to go for the holiday.

Nonperishable food items for the food drive can be dropped off during business hours at the clinic, 1032 S. Spring St.

Image Information: GETTING READY FOR the annual food drive at Brooks Chiropractice & Wellness Clinic were (from left) chiropractic technician Kim Dean, radiological technician Brandyn Brooks, and doctors Jacob J.Chapman and Phillip L. Brooks. Photo by Mark Jaeger