

BREADCRUMBS

April 2010

The Volunteer & Community Newsletter of the Irving Park Community Food Pantry
Celebrating Twenty-Six Years of Service to the Community

Brighter Holidays for Many Due to Christmas-Distribution Volunteers

The Food Pantry's annual Holiday distribution was a great success, thanks to all of the donations of money and food, plus the extra time committed by our volunteers. The Pantry provided the ingredients for a full holiday meal to 371 families, regardless of size. In addition, 353 children received Christmas gifts of games, books, dolls and toys.



Vicci, Barb and Nora ran the Toy Room during the Christmas distribution, which was filled to the brim with wonderful toys!

The event was greatly aided by the 76 volunteers who helped that morning. Special thanks go to the eight volunteers from Allstate, who helped in the toy room and ensured children who accompanied their parents could have their pictures taken with Santa. It gave them a Christmas they will long remember, as will all of the volunteers who helped out.

We'd also like to thank Jewel Food Stores at Six Corners, one of our staunchest supporters. In addition to the usual great food donations, the store provided 20 full Holiday meals for clients via certificates to the largest families (in lieu of a large turkey). Special thanks to Store Director Scott Cygan and to Angie in the Deli and Julie in the Bakery, who organized

A television crew from WTTW's Chicago Tonight program spent that morning at the Pantry filming for a news story on the Express Stamps Program that ran on February 2.



Save the date! Help raise money and walk with the Pantry on June 26th in the 25th annual Hunger Walk. Ask Kate for details.

New Committees Need Volunteers

Several new committees are being formed to help with special projects. These include a Fundraising/Event Planning, Strategic Planning Committee and others. If you are interested in becoming more involved with planning events, contact Kate Roche at the Pantry or at kate.roche@sbcglobal.net

Computer Upgrade Aids Planning

The Food Pantry has installed new computers, both desktop and laptop models, to facilitate operations and communication. The funds were provided by a generous grant from the Jewel-Osco Hunger Relief Grant Program.

The grants were used to purchase several new computers so we can improve operations. Initially, work is being done to update and optimize our mailing lists, so we can contact church groups, media outlets and other organizations in our community more effectively.

Pantry Featured in GCFD Report

This year's Annual Report from the Greater Chicago Food Depository includes a number of photos taken at the Food Pantry. They include two-page spreads of clients outside the church and our intake decks, plus a nice photo of our van. A color photo of the church also is on the home page of the group's site at <http://www.chicagosfoodbank.org>.



Future Pantry volunteers sort the proceeds of their food drive.

Food Drives Keep Shelves Stocked

Jerry and Mitzi Wasik held a food drive in conjunction with their triplets' first birthday party! The donations continued to come in after the party from people who couldn't attend. Many thanks to the Wasiks for the great idea and the photo.

The Vitamin Shoppe at Six Corners is sponsoring a food drive throughout April. Spread the word that all unopened, nonperishable food and personal-care items can be dropped off. Thanks to Store Manager Michael Windbiel. For details, call 773-685-1432.

Five Northwest side Walgreens stores are hosting a collection of food and toiletries via collection boxes until April 30th. Participating are the stores at 5935 W. Addison; 4745 W. Belmont, 4343 N Central Ave, 4040 N Cicero Ave., and 4001 W Irving Park Rd

Special thanks to Andrew Pett, manager of the Addison and Austin Walgreens for initiating and coordinating this effort!

Help Spread The Word!

The Pantry recently updated its three-fold pocket brochure, adding more details about the Pantry and its services, as well as photos of volunteers. If you'd like some copies to hand out at neighborhood events or meetings, stop by the office on Wednesday or contact Kate at kate.roche@sbcglobal.net. She'll give you as many as you need!



In the Pantry's new brochure, Jim and Rick are featured with the Pantry truck, while Leslie is shown sorting canned goods.

Volunteer Spotlight: Jay Skilton

Jay Skilton has worked with the Food Pantry since the summer of 2008 and joined the Board of Directors last fall. He handles the distribution to clients each week, serving as the person they all interact with as they pick up their food.

Jay was born and raised near Philadelphia, the youngest of four children. He came to the Midwest to attend Lake Forest College and "fell in love with Chicago," he says.

After college, he returned to Pennsylvania and worked for many years for *TV Guide*. When it scaled back in the 1980s, he cut his ties and move back to Chicago. "That was so many



years ago. Chicago has become my home."

He continued to work in publishing, helping to launch the prepress-services firm Anthology Inc. Since leaving there, he's provided consulting and freelance editorial services to the publishing industry.

A certified personal trainer, Jay was married for 15 years, with no children. His diverse interests include reading, movies, gardening, fitness, cooking, nutrition, tennis, travel, photography and art.

A resident of Old Irving Park, Jay became aware of the Pantry through its Christmas distribution. "I believe there is a very real need for help right here in our own community. There is something so visceral about hunger. It is so basic, so tangible, so easy to feel, yet it is so wrong in a society as affluent as ours. I get a very rewarding sensation seeing someone very young or very old smile because of the simple act of giving to them food they so desperately need."

Captains Will Smooth Operations

The Pantry has named volunteer 'captains' for each activity within the operation (intake, kitchen, etc.), and they have been meeting every month since the fall. The goal is to smooth the way activities progress so clients can get in and out quickly and volunteers can work efficiently. If you have suggestions, find your area's 'captain' and let them know

Contact Us

If you are interested in contributing to this newsletter or want details of any of the events mentioned, contact Kate Roche at kate.roche@sbcglobal.net or contact Executive Director John Psiharis at irvpkfoodpantry@aol.com.