



IRVING PARK COMMUNITY

Food Pantry

History

The Irving Park Community Food Pantry works closely with churches, civic organizations, state & local government officials, national & local businesses, manufacturers, schools and neighborhood residents. Together we effectively help over 600 households, representing more than 1600 individuals in need of emergency food each month of the year.

The Irving Park Community Food Pantry began as a response to frequent requests for food. In the early 1970's Leila Duncan, a member of the Irving Park United Methodist Church at Grace St. & Keeler Avenue, personally responded to people in need by purchasing and delivering groceries to individuals and families in her Northwest side neighborhood. By the 1980's several people aided her in these efforts. In 1983 the church began providing USDA commodities to community residents who could provide proof of need. Sensitive insight on the part of then Rev. Philip Sheets, led to the official formation of the Pantry as a collective neighborhood effort.

This action addressed the shared needs of all congregations as requests for food to all of the pastors in the area was becoming an increasing concern. Neighborhood clergy pooled the modest food resources each was attempting to maintain and sent people to the Pantry that, at the time, was located in the Irving Park United Methodist Church at 3801 N. Keeler Avenue. The coalition of churches formalized their work in 1984. The Irving Park Community Food Pantry was formally incorporated as an Illinois non-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization in 1987.

The Irving Park Community Food Pantry moved out of the Keeler Avenue location and into the Emmanuel United Methodist Church at 4256 N. Ridgeway Avenue in 2019 where it continues to operate today. The Pantry is a member in good standing with the Greater Chicago Food Depository. In addition, the Pantry is a member of the North Side Anti-Hunger Network and enjoys a deserved reputation for fairness, quality and caring service in the social service community in Chicago.