

# BREADCRUMBS

February 2016

The Newsletter of the Irving Park Community Food Pantry  
Celebrating Thirty-One Years of Service to the Community

## Holiday Program Aids 1,143

The Irving Park Community Food Pantry's December 16<sup>th</sup> Holiday Distribution provided the makings for a holiday meal to 1,143 of our neighbors in 324 households, approximately the same number as last year. In addition, 288 children up to 12 years of age in 140 households received a toy, a stocking stuffer and mittens, scarves and caps, a slight increase from last year. We also gave a book to many of the children, although there weren't enough for everyone.



*IPUMC Pastor Katherine Paisley and Dale Tippit led clients in carols while they waited in the sanctuary to be called to pick up food during the Holiday distribution.*

As clients waited upstairs in the sanctuary, they enjoyed Christmas caroling led by Dale Tippet and Irving Park United Methodist Church Pastor Katherine Paisley. Arts activities for the children were offered by Arts Van Go Go. Each household also received United Airlines amenities kits filled with slippers and personal-care items through the support of the Rotary Club Chicago O'Hare.

We had some toys remaining, but they didn't go to waste. Fifty were donated to the Magic After School Place program at Irving Park Lutheran Church, 25 to the IPUMC Hispanic mission and 10 to St. Viator for their annual holiday adopt-a-family program.



*Volunteers, led by coordinator Sara Yoest (far left), prepare the Toy Room during the Holiday program.*

The remaining toys were taken by Alderman John Arena to donate to Toys For Tots. We would like to thank everyone for their contributions, as they helped many children at the Pantry and in the area.

Thanks also to Sara Yoest and Debby Fries for coordinating the toy program, and for Christine Lee and others for making gift runs and purchasing stocking stuffers and other pieces. Thanks also to Debby, Anne Mette and everyone else who helped them organize and distribute the toys.



*Santa (Mike Betancourt) and elves Amanda and Hannah gave kids an early toy while they waited in the sanctuary during the Holiday program.*

Thank you to all who hosted food and toy collections in support of our holiday program. Toy boxes were located at Irving Park Baptist Church, Irving Park Lutheran Church, Irving Park United Methodist Church, Josi's Frozen Yogurt Café, Pert Cleaners, St. John's Episcopal Church, Starbucks on Kostner and the office of Alderman John Arena.

## CARE Gives Pet Gifts at Holidays

We want to thank the volunteers from the Community Animal Rescue Effort (CARE), who obtained donations for our clients' pets and ensured that each pet received a special holiday toy and treat in addition to pet food and supplies during the Holiday Distribution. They gave out supplies to 113 households for dogs, cats, a gerbil, a guinea pig, six parrots and a number of parakeets. We are always in need of cat food especially as well as kibble for small-breed dogs.



*Volunteers set up the Pet Food Corner to provide clients with pet food during the holiday program.*

## Food Drives Aid Holiday Program

A number of toy and food drives were held for our holiday program. Thank you to Pet Smart at Six Corners for their generous donation of 300+ plus stuffed animals and to Target on Addison for its donation of gift cards.

Others holding drives included the Alzheimer's Association of Greater Illinois, Community Savings Bank (food and \$2,000 donation), Disney II Magnet Elementary School, Faith United Church, Intrinsic Schools, Irving Park Lutheran Church, Irving Park United Methodist Church, Jazzercise at Irving Park Lutheran Church, Redeemer of Cavalry United Methodist Church, St. Viator Catholic Church, St. Viator Elementary School and the Villa Townhome Association.

## Mount Olive Contributions Grow

Added thanks go to the folks at Mount Olive Evangelical Free Church, which has continued to bring in donations from their November canvas. We recently received another check for \$2,000 from later donations received after the earlier contribution. All told, the donations have more than doubled last year's contribution! Thank you to Roger Torbick and Alfreda Rommel for coordinating the program and making it a success.



## Disney Drive Aids Pantry

Students at Disney II Elementary Magnet School collected a mountain of food for the Pantry during its December food drive and presented it to Executive Director John Psiharis (tall guy in the back room) during his visit in January.

## Liberty Runs Donation Program

The Liberty Tax Office at 4900 West Irving Park Road has begun a program in which they will donate \$5 to the Pantry for every tax return completed before February 15<sup>th</sup>. For more information, contact Michael McNichols at 773/286-6900; [menicholsm@marwill.com](mailto:menicholsm@marwill.com)

## Nutrition Classes Start Again

The Pantry's Nutrition class has begun its latest series. The classes are led by Jessica Peralta, nutrition instructor from the University of Illinois Extension Service, during our regular operation hours. The students create recipes using many of the foods we supply them with in our distributions.



*Pastor Katherine Paisley (in black at near left) leads volunteers in a prayer prior to the holiday program.*

## Pantry Serves 2,341 in December

In December, during the two weeks we were open for regular distributions, the Pantry served 2,341 people in 716 households, including 126 new people in 41 households and 131 people in 40 households during our Tuesday night hours.

Pet food was supplied to 299 clients. Thank you to everyone who contributed to our holiday program and to our ongoing efforts. Your donations allow us to continue being "Neighbors Helping Neighbors!"