

# BREADCRUMBS

March 2016

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

## Be a Bunny for the Pantry

The Irving Park Community Food Pantry again is distributing Easter baskets to its clients for their children on the first four Wednesdays of March (Easter is March 27th). We are collecting goodies (candy, snacks, small toys, etc.) for children in the age categories of under 2, 2 to 5, and 6 to 8 years old. We will need donations throughout the month, as we often run out early.



*Volunteers prepare baskets for clients during the Easter program in 2015.*

Please drop off donations at the Irving Park United Methodist Church (corner of Grace and Keeler - Grace Street entrance). Financial donations are used to purchase necessary supplies, especially to restock depleted items late in the month. This can be done by mail or through PayPal at the Pantry's website ([www.irvingparkfoodpantry.org](http://www.irvingparkfoodpantry.org)).



## Be a Bunny for a Child of the Food Pantry!

For the first four weeks of March, we will distribute filled Easter baskets for boys and girls ages 0-8 years. Our distribution days are: **Wednesdays, March 2, 9, 16 and 23 at 9 a.m. and Tuesday, March 8<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.**

Because we have limited space, please deliver your completed Easter baskets by arranging a time with us. **Call Lee Stein at 312-608-1465 or [volunteer@irvingparkfoodpantry.org](mailto:volunteer@irvingparkfoodpantry.org).** We give out about 75 baskets per Wednesday, and about 40 at the Tuesday distribution.

Baskets are identified by gender and age range (**under 2, 2-5, 6-8 yrs**). We put grass in medium sized gift bags or baskets and layer safe, fun and useful things that easily can be found in a \$1 store like:

- Plastic eggs filled (fill them with jelly beans or loose change)
- Snacks – juice pouches, crackers, breakfast bars, pop-tarts, microwave popcorn
- Wrapped candy
- Bubbles, Nerf balls, yo-yos, pinwheels, etc
- Easter pencils, erasers, toys
- Small stuffed animals
- Stickers, crayons, markers
- Little books, activity pads
- Homemade bookmarks
- *Please avoid woven baskets with handles, use the plastic or fabric baskets that is easier for stacking.*



*Employees at AIM Consulting in Chicago donated toys and put together baskets for the Pantry's Easter program in 2015. We are glad to have help from any companies interested in taking part still this year.*

## Disney Craft Fair Raises Funds

Thank you to the second-grade students at Disney II Elementary Magnet School and their teachers, Katie Fielden and Elyse D'Andrea, who donated the profits from their December crafts fair to the Pantry.

The students' donation totaled \$1,314, a new record for the program, now in its third year. We appreciate their efforts on our behalf and the thoughtful questions they had during our visit.



*Pantry Executive Director John Psiharis (center rear) accepts the Disney donation, along with Office Manager Sandra Schwarzbeck (holding scarves as rear).*

## St. Viator Holds Toiletries Drive

Thank you to the Student Council at St. Viator Elementary School, which ran a drive for personal-care items in January.

They donated four copy-paper boxes of items plus a shopping bag of knitted hats! We appreciate all their efforts on our behalf.



*Members of St. Viator's Student Council show the results of their drive to gather personal-care items for the Pantry in January.*



*Employees at VSA volunteered at the Pantry in February, working the line and performing other tasks.*

## VSA Volunteers at Pantry

Thanks also to the six volunteers from VSA Partners who helped out at the Pantry on February 10<sup>th</sup>. We are always willing to work with companies who are interested in having some volunteers visit. Contact Volunteer Manager Lee Stein at [volunteer@irvingparkfoodpantry.org](mailto:volunteer@irvingparkfoodpantry.org)

## Cat, Small-Dog Food Needed

We are the only food pantry in Chicago to give our clients pet food, but pet-food donations from our usual sources have dwindled recently. We are especially in need of cat food in all types as well as kibble for smaller-sized dogs. We always need additional supplies of litter and other supplies, toys, etc.

Thank you to the Community Animal Rescue Effort for their partnership in this program and to all the CARE volunteers who coordinate this valuable effort.

## Use Amazon to Donate to Pantry

Don't forget to use Amazon Smile at Amazon when you shop online. If you use the bookmark and designate the Irving Park Community Food Pantry as the recipient, the Pantry will receive 0.5% of the price of all purchases.

## Pantry Aids 1,365 in January

In January, the Pantry served 1,365 people in 491 households, including 103 new clients in 44 households and 67 people in 22 families who came during our Tuesday night hours. We also provided pet food to 258 households for dogs, cats, birds and other small animals. Our volunteers also helped six households with nine people apply for SNAP benefits. Thank you to everyone for ensuring we remain "Neighbors Helping Neighbors!"