

BREADCRUMBS

April 2015

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

Pantry Welcomes Elvia Esparza, New Client Resources Coordinator

The Irving Park Community Food Pantry is pleased to say that Elvia Esparza has joined us as our new Client Resources Coordinator. Elvia is a social worker with nine years of experience working with clients in need, including high-risk pregnant women as a Care Coordinator; crime victims as a Bi-lingual Public Safety Social Service Worker and children as a Child Welfare Specialist.



Elvia Esperanza began work at the Pantry March 4th.

She has a Bachelors degree from Roosevelt University and a Master of Social Work from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker. Elvia is a neighborhood resident who lives just a few blocks from the Pantry and speaks fluent Spanish.

She will be providing our clients with assistance and referrals to organizations and programs that can help improve their situations. Our thanks go to the FDC Foundation for their annual grant that allows us to fund her part-time position and provide assistance to our clients.



Sarah Ayala of the Student Council Executive Committee at St. Viator Elementary School gathers some of the hygiene products that the Student Council collected during its drive earlier this year. She is helped by Student Council Advisor Mary Kay Shutt (left) and Principal Colleen Brewer.

SaveMax Depot Offers Program

Pantry Volunteer Rafal Glaz, owner of the SaveMax Depot, an office-products supplier, is offering a program in which new and existing clients can align their accounts so their purchases of toner provide us with donations in the coming months.



From March 15 to May 31, SaveMax Depot will set aside 15% of profit generated from Premium Compatible toner purchases and 10% of profit generated from brand-name toner purchases.

They will verify their sales totals with the Pantry and make the donation in June. For more information, visit www.savemaxdepot.com. We appreciate his company's support and will work with any companies interested in programs.

Liberty Tax Programs Aid Pantry

Thank you to President Mike Barrett and Manager Mike McNichols of Liberty Tax Services on West Irving Park Road, who partnered with the Pantry once again this year to generate donations during tax time.

The company donated \$5 to the Pantry for every paid tax return completed between January 2 and February 15, and then offered a 50% discount on tax-preparation fees to anyone making a \$20 donation to the Pantry through March 31st. The initial part of the promotion raised \$560 for the Pantry!



Liberty Tax Service President Mike Barrett (right) and Manager Mike McNichols (rear) present a check to Pantry Executive Director John Psiharis and Grants Writer Gloria Price, the results of their promotion to raise money based on tax preparations.

Pantry Achieves Bronze Level in GuideStar Exchange Rating Plan

The Pantry has achieved the Bronze level of participation at GuideStar Exchange, which documents charities' transparency and record-keeping and provides up-to-date details about each nonprofit group involved.



The Exchange is used by a variety of businesses and philanthropic organizations as a credible reference when they are allotting charitable contributions. For more information on the program, visit www.guidestar.org. Thank you to volunteer Gloria Price, who detailed all of the information required by GuideStar so we could achieve this rating.



Volunteer Ashley Abboushi (second from right) worked with staffers at AIM Consulting in Chicago to put together Easter baskets midmonth using donations from the consulting firm and additional donations.

Easter Basket Program a Success!

Thank you to everyone who donated goodies and money to help with our distribution of Easter baskets to our clients for their children in March.

Special thanks to Irving Park Lutheran Church, Irving Park United Methodist Church, St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church and Disney II Junior Girl Scout Troop for their donations of completed baskets for our distribution.

Thanks also to volunteers Ashley Abboushi and Judy Allen, who organized and created more baskets mid-month, as well as AIM Consulting in Chicago—A Technology Consulting and Solutions Firm, which donated funds to the program and helped put together baskets mid-month.

Pantry Aids 1,359 in February

In February, the Pantry served 1,359 people in 478 households, including 24 new households with 64 people and 47 households with 128 people who came during our Tuesday evening hours.

The total does not include 80 households who received emergency food the first week of February when a large snowfall made it difficult for volunteers, deliveries and clients make it to the Pantry (the second month in a row).

We also gave pet food to 230 households for their dogs, cats and birds, working with the Community Animal Rescue Effort. Our volunteers also assisted six households to apply for SNAP benefits.

Thank you to everyone for your time, money and overall support. With your help, we will continue to be "Neighbors Helping Neighbors."