

# BREADCRUMBS

September 2015

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

## Wine Tasting Set for October 25<sup>th</sup>

The Irving Park Community Food Pantry will hold its seventh annual Beer & Wine-Tasting event from 3 to 5 p.m. on Sunday, October 25<sup>th</sup> at Abbey Pub (3420 W. Grace St.). Tickets are \$40 apiece, with funds used to aid our food-purchasing budget.

A variety of wines from around the world will be available, as well as craft beers from Chicago and other locations. To order tickets, call 773-283-6296 or order online at [www.irvingparkfoodpantry.org](http://www.irvingparkfoodpantry.org).

In case you were wondering, there is no Bears game that day.



*The 2014 Wine Tasting was a big success, with a variety of wines and beers offered to attendees. This year's will be held on October 25<sup>th</sup> at Abbey Pub, a new location.*

Do you have goods or services (collectibles, restaurant certificates, photography session, musical talents, dog-training or pet care services, auto services, travel services, spa services, concert tickets, jewelry, landscape, accounting, personal training, retail) you would be able to offer?

Please donate whatever you can to our Silent Auction to be held in conjunction with the tasting party. Use the same contact information above to let us know.



*Volunteers prepare to hand out coats during the Pantry's 2014 coat distribution. Last year, the Pantry gave out about 350 winter coats to clients.*

## Coat Distribution Set for October

The Irving Park Community Food Pantry will be distributing winter coats to our clients in October, so please check your closets for any gently used coats that you can do without and bring them in.

The coats can be left with food donations at the bottom of the stairs at the Grace Street Entrance at the Irving Park United Methodist Church or delivered on Wednesday mornings during the Pantry's operating hours (9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.). All sizes and shapes of heavier coats for winter, for children and adults, are needed.

## Whole Foods Helps Out

Thank you to the four employees from Whole Foods who visited during our distribution on August 12 and helped create food bags and perform other chores.

We are always willing to work with companies that would like to organize employees to volunteer with us for a day.

## Pantry Garden Starts Up

Thank you to everyone who attended the dedication of our new herb garden near our entry door at Irving Park United Methodist Church on July 25. It was a beautiful day and we appreciate the turnout at our festivities to introduce the garden.

We thank everyone who contributed time, money and effort to install the garden and get it off to a good start. Thank you to all of our special guests, including State Representative Jaime Andrade, Alderman John Arena and Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner Frank Avila, as well as representatives from community groups that have supported our efforts.

The garden has been planted with a variety of herbs this year, with the intent to expand to plant vegetables (lettuces, radishes, tomatoes, etc.) next year in the first full growing season. Each of the boxes of herbs is being offered for "adoption," allowing different groups to help care for it, weeding and seeding the herbs. Adopters to date include Irving Park Hispana United Methodist Church (cilantro), Irving Park United Methodist Church Youth (rosemary) and Carlson Community Services - Three Brothers Garden (basil).

Other boxes are still available to adopt. We also are looking for donations to help us obtain an arbor, a secondary bench and security lights. If you are interested in adopting a box or helping with these needs, please contact Vicci Rodgers at [viccirodgers@gmail.com](mailto:viccirodgers@gmail.com)



*A number of officials and dignitaries helped cut the ribbon on the Pantry's new herb garden during the garden's dedication in July.*

In August, we began harvesting and distributing fresh basil, rosemary and thyme from the plants recently installed. About 25 small bags of herbs were distributed to clients within minutes of being picked. Thank you to Mimi Nguyen, who harvested the herbs and will continue to do so on a weekly basis this summer.



Pantry supporters get their first look at the new garden.

The clients were quite surprised and excited to receive them. One intended to make a rosemary chicken, while another mentioned making spaghetti sauce. We are pleased we can make use of the garden already and have it be so well received!

Please stop by whenever you are walking by Keeler and see how well our volunteers' efforts have paid off. Thanks also to the FDC Foundation for its grant money and support to help make the garden a reality.

## Tuesday Night Crowd Grows

As of August, it has been two years since the Pantry began opening for two night-time hours on the second Tuesday of each month. We are happy to say that our numbers continued to rise in the second year of the program. In our first year, we served an average of 36 households each month with 105 people. In our second year, we served an average of 54 households each month with 152 people. In our largest month in the first year (July), we served 53 households with 149 people; this year, in our largest month (December), we served 71 households with 219 people.

Best of all, the program signed up 67 new households this year, totaling 153 new people being served. They have been assimilated into the Tuesday night and regular Wednesday times.

## Pantry Serves 1,427 in July

In July, the Pantry served 1,427 people in 495 households, including 36 new households with 88 people, as well as 130 people in 39 households for our Tuesday night distribution. Our volunteers helped 7 households with 11 people apply for SNAP benefits, while our Pet Food Corner supplied 42 households with pet food.

Thank you to everyone who supports our efforts to continue to be "Neighbors Helping Neighbors!"