

BREADCRUMBS

February 2012

The Newsletter of the Irving Park Community Food Pantry
Celebrating Twenty-Eight Years of Service to the Community

FDC Awards Major Grant to Pantry

The Irving Park Community Food Pantry is pleased to announce that the FDC Foundation has approved a grant to the Pantry for its Fresh Produce for Better Health Initiative. The grant, for \$15,000, represents a 50% increase from FDC's 2011 grant.

The Pantry was one of only two organizations to get an increase in funding. From a handful of organizations several years ago, FDC now funds 28 groups and received three times as many requests for funds than last year, according to board member Susan Patke.



Founded in 2008, the FDC Foundation supports charitable groups that aid improved nutrition as well as other health, education and housing efforts.

While informing us of the grant, Patke said the group was "in awe" of what the Pantry accomplishes with its resources and that it manages its operation well with a caring group of volunteers. The group also noted how much is accomplished despite the unprecedented numbers being served.

The grant allows the Pantry to expand its capability to provide fresh produce each week to our clients.

Special thanks to volunteer Gloria Price for her work in preparing our proposal and for her efforts to foster a close relationship with the foundation.



Volunteers and their children helped prepare more than 150 baskets to be given to client at Easter in 2011.

Be a Bunny for the Pantry

The Pantry again will be distributing Easter bags and baskets to its clients for their children in March (as Easter is April 8th). We are collecting goodies (candy and small toys, plus plenty of Easter grass) for children in the age categories of under 2, 2 to 5, and 6 to 8 years old.

Please bring any donations to the Pantry office. They will be used to make up baskets by church and pantry volunteers prior to the distribution.

If you would like to help create the baskets, contact Lee at the Pantry or leesstein@spacecushion.com. Questions about donations can be sent to Vicci Rodgers at viccirodgers@gmail.com.

Thanks to IBM for Pledges

Thanks go to all the employees and retirees at IBM who donate to the Pantry through the company's Employee Charitable Contribution Campaign during 2011. The members pledged \$4,999 to help the Pantry!



Santa (Cody Cousino) and his head elf (Anna Cohn) greeted clients on December 21st.

Thanks for Your Christmas Help!

During its December 21st Holiday distribution, the Pantry provided the fixings for a holiday meal and toys, stocking stuffers and books to 1,276 people in 409 households. Many of our children were delighted that Santa Claus came by to visit. Thank you to all who continue to support our efforts to help our neighbors in need!



Jay gets into the holiday spirit before opening.

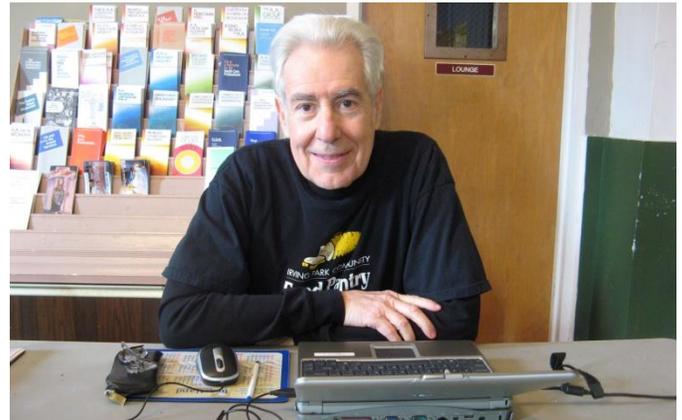


Keshia, Donna, Kate and Anne are ready to pull cards.

Volunteer Focus: Dennis Delavara

While most volunteers help clients receive their three-day emergency supply of food, Dennis Delavara helps them obtain food the other days of the month by assisting them to apply for SNAP benefits in the side room at the rear of the Pantry.

Dennis spent more than 30 years in management at Kraft in the fields of information technology, finance and strategy, and human resources. He learned about the Pantry while serving on the board at the Greater Chicago Food Depository. He took GCFD's training for SNAP applications and has helped clients at the Pantry and at other pantries.



“There is nothing more basic than feeding your family every day,” says Dennis. “For those in our community who are having difficulty doing that, the pantry is invaluable. It’s an honor to belong to such a caring organization.”

Dennis was born in Glendale, Calif., and moved to Chicago for his first job after graduating from USC with a degree in economics. He also has a master’s degree in management from MIT. “I’ve never wanted to live anywhere else after I got here.”

Dennis especially enjoys the personal interaction that comes with volunteering. “Donating money isn’t as fulfilling as dealing face-to-face with the people who are in need.”

Pantry Client List Remains High

In 2011, the Pantry had 7,261 visits for 19,683 people. The numbers continue at an all-time high.

That included 604 first-time visitors with 1,716 people in their households who were enrolled.

Volunteers donated more than 9,275 hours to help our neighbors in need. Thank you for your help!