

BREADCRUMBS

August 2009

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

Welcome to the August edition of the newsletter designed for the volunteers and friends of the Irving Park Community Food Pantry. The Board of Directors of the Pantry recognizes that the strongest asset of the Pantry is our volunteer staff. Thanks to you all and have a great summer.

Three Brothers Garden

This summer during the weekly food distribution, you may have noticed someone coming in with a basket of fresh-picked produce and wondered where it came from. In fact, any time we get fresh produce for our clients, we celebrate as it is always in short supply and much appreciated by our clients. This summer we are enjoying the bounty of the new Three Brothers Garden.

The garden is a partnership between Irving Park Carlson Ministries and Irving Park Lutheran Church and is named for benefactors Helge, Carl and George Carlson. It was built on a vacant lot owned by the church. In late May, twenty raised beds were planted with organic vegetables that are easy to prepare or that can be eaten out-of-hand, like lettuces, cucumbers, tomatoes and beans. The harvested vegetables are delivered to our Pantry every week.



In addition to the raised growing beds, the garden also features a community gathering space. The area is landscaped with colorful shrubs and perennials and will include a seating area. Classes on organic gardening, sustainable living and cooking with garden produce will be conducted in this space.

The Garden project is looking for volunteers to assist with its vegetable harvest. The Garden is located at 4107 N. Pulaski. You can help by volunteering to harvest every Tuesday at 5pm. Volunteers pick, wash and bag vegetables which are delivered to our Pantry on Wednesday mornings.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Irving Park Carlson Ministries for their generosity in helping us fight hunger in our neighborhood. For more information or to volunteer at the Three Brothers Garden, please contact Liz Mills at 773/398-6766 or lizmills@sbcglobal.net.

Hunger Walk

On June 20th, many of our volunteers participated in the Greater Chicago Food Depository's 24th Annual Hunger Walk. Proceeds from our walkers total approximately \$8,000, making this our most successful walk to date. Walkers included Mary Ann Ballard, Trudy Moore, Jay Skilton, Mary Houlihan, John Psiharis, Kate and Madeline Roche, Bob and Pat Eisenhart, Margie Pomonis, Mike Mette, Barb, Steve and



Anna Cohn, Jim and Nora Byrne, Vania Bandelli, Andre Byczkowski, Johns College Prep High School walkers club, Lloyd DaMask, Donna DaMask Elkin, and eight walkers from Boeing Corporation. Also, Jewel held a raffle and presented us with the proceeds.

Without the help of our neighbors and benefactors, we couldn't help the many families who pass through our doors every week. Thank you to everyone who participated.



Statistics

For the month of July 2009, we serve 1,832 people in 646 households. This is a 23% increase over the number served in July 2008.

Year- to-date, we have served 10,475 people in 3,429 families, which is an increase of 33% over last year.

Thank You

Thank you to the many people and organizations who have donated school supplies or funds for the purchase of supplies. The OIPA Parents' Committee was particularly generous as was Carter Westminster Church. These school supplies are much appreciated by our clients and their children.

Wine Tasting Fundraiser

More details will follow, but it looks as though the second annual Wine Tasting event will be held on Saturday, October 3rd. Those of you who attended last year's event will remember that this is a wonderful evening that raised a significant amount of money for our pantry. Mark your calendars and watch for more information!

Volunteers of the Month

It seems like every week I find myself needing the services of our resident Spanish interpreters, Madeline and Lupe Cervantes. Not only are these sisters a joy to work with, they help us constantly with our new clients as we walk them through the registration process. Here's what you didn't know about them:

Madeline and Lupe are the two youngest of five sisters. Their parents came from Mexico although they met and married in Chicago. The sisters lived a few blocks from the Jane Adams Hull House and as they grew up, Hull House became their second home. They learned about and experienced the arts which were offered freely and with care and attention by Hull House staff.

After high school, Madeline went to business college and then on to work at the Chicago Sun Times. She became the

secretary to the paper's comptroller. She later worked at a law firm in their investment department until her retirement.

Lupe followed her love of the arts to the Art Institute for four years. She then worked in a specialty studio as a hand lettering and design artist. She also exhibited at local art fairs for 28 years, specializing in oils and watercolors and silk screen printing.



Both sisters have been volunteering from an early age, beginning at Hull House. They are members of Redeemer of Calvary United Methodist Church where they have taught Sunday School, they have helped with summer Bible school and sung with the Church choir. They took care of the Church treasury for over six years and Lupe was Pastor Parish chairperson for three years.

They feel their twice weekly yoga classes have helped them stay active and healthy. Thank you to Madeline and Lupe for all the work they do for us and the joy you bring to the volunteer staff.

Express Stamps

You may have heard some of the volunteers talking about the Express Stamps program. We are one of two pantries asked to participate in this food stamp screening pilot program in the Chicago area. This program provides a way for our clients who qualify to get food stamps via a Link card in their hands quickly and encourage them to apply for the full program to help them with their food purchases. Pat Eisenhart, Maryann Turk, Vania Bardelli, Jay Skilton, Peggy Calderone, Kate Roche, Carol Schultz and John Psiharis all attended training in the program at the Greater Chicago Food Depository. Two volunteers are assigned each week to identify clients who may be eligible for the program and to help them apply for the food stamp program. It is an exciting opportunity to help our clients navigate the paperwork that is involved.

Contact Us

If you are interested in contributing to this newsletter or need more information, you can contact Carol Schultz at schultzfamily02@aol.com or the Pantry at irvpkfoodpantry@aol.com.