

BREADCRUMBS

November 2014

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

Pantry Makes Holiday Plans

The Irving Park Community Food Pantry has begun building up stores for its two holiday distributions, in November and on December 17th. We are asking for contributions of funds, food and fun (i.e., books and toys) to help make the season brighter for those in our community who can use a hand during the holiday season.

In November, we provide clients during our regular weekly distributions with additional meat and trimmings for a Thanksgiving dinner. On December 17th, we'll provide a special holiday distribution at which we give clients the makings for a full holiday dinner. We also allow clients to select a gift for each of their children from a special toy room.

For these special distributions, we are especially in need of 100% juice, stuffing, cranberry sauce, canned yams and vegetables, instant potatoes, cake mixes, Jell-O and canned pumpkin.



Volunteers set up stations by family size for the Pantry's annual holiday distribution in 2013.

For traditional food drives, we also are in need of dry goods, such as peanut butter, macaroni & cheese, hamburger helper-type meals (such as rice-a-roni and pasta-roni), whole-grain crackers, dried fruit and nuts, dry soup mixes, energy bars and juice (100% fruit juice). We always are in need of toiletries and white crew socks.



Pert Cleaners on Irving Park Road was one of several businesses to hold toy drives for the Pantry in 2013. Here, owner Frank Lupo helps Pantry Operations Manager Jim Byrne (right) and volunteer Craig O'Connor collect donations for the Holiday Distribution.

We typically give a toy and a book to our clients for each of their children, about 400 in all (ages infant to 12). For some, it will be the only gift they receive. Your donations ensure clients' children can talk about their special presents with their friends who receive so much more. We especially need gifts for older children (age 10 to 12), especially boys, as we receive far fewer for that age group.

Unwrapped new toys and food donations can be brought to the Pantry at the Irving Park United Methodist Church (3801 N. Keeler Ave.) during office hours (please call 773/283-6262 to check on times, as they vary). Donations can be left at the base of the stairs inside the Grace Street entrance. They also can be brought to the church from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Wednesdays during Pantry operating hours.

Volunteers are needed to collect toys, organize the toy room, and help with the toy distribution on December 17. For information or to volunteer, contact Vicci Rodgers at viccirodgers@gmail.com.

We appreciate all your help in ensuring our neighbors can enjoy the holiday season!



Julia Gertsman, head of customer relations and Internet sales at Martin Nissan in Skokie, presents Pantry Executive Director John Psiharis with its donation. Also present were Pantry volunteers Kristin Kallis (with Roxie) and Marsha Niazman.

Facebook Friends Win Donation for Pantry from Martin Nissan

We are pleased to say that the Pantry won a \$500 donation from Martin Nissan in Skokie in its monthly vote among a selected group of local charities that took place on its Facebook page.

We came in second in an earlier vote and won when we re-entered in September. The donation will help fund our Pet Food Corner, a collaboration with the Community Animal Rescue Effort (CARE) that has become very popular with clients (we are one of the only pantries to supply clients with pet food).

Thank you to everyone who voted us into winning!

Mount Olive Plans Food Canvas

Thank you to Mount Olive Church for holding its annual food drive for the Pantry on November 23rd. Church volunteers will be canvassing the community to alert them to the program the previous weekend and then will collect donations from people's porches on the 23rd.

As noted on the first page, we especially need items for our holiday distributions, including 100% juice, stuffing, cranberry sauce, canned yams and vegetables, instant potatoes, cake mixes, Jell-O and canned pumpkin.

For traditional food drives, we also are in need of dry goods, such as peanut butter, macaroni & cheese, hamburger helper-type meals (such as rice-a-roni and pasta-roni), whole-grain crackers, dried fruit and nuts, dry soup mixes, energy bars and juice (100% fruit juice).

We hope you will be able to contribute to this great annual effort by one of our regular partners.

VSA Partners Volunteer at Pantry

Special thanks to the seven volunteers from VSA Partners who helped at the Pantry on October 8th. They worked the food lines, greeted arriving clients and performed other duties, giving some of our volunteers a break in their schedule.

We are open to company groups volunteering when it can be scheduled, as well as working with companies who can hold food drives, sock and toiletry drives and other special efforts with their employees. Please contact Volunteer Manager Lee Stein at volunteer@irvingparkfoodpantry.org to learn more.

Winter Coat Drive a Success

Thank you to everyone who donated winter coats to our annual distribution in October, when 330 clients received coats. We appreciate your help in ensuring our clients stay warm! Thanks to Carter Westminster Presbyterian Church, the Disney II Elementary School PTA, Park Ridge Presbyterian Church and St. Nicholas Albanian Orthodox Church for their collections on our behalf.



Volunteers (l-r) Janice Jarrett, Sue Uchida and Pam True organize coats during the Pantry's month-long coat distribution to clients (one per family) in October.

Pantry Served 1,919 in October

In October, the Pantry served 1,919 people in 673 households, including 174 new people in 64 households. Our volunteers assisted eight households with 22 people to apply online for SNAP benefits.

We also provided pet food (for dogs, cats, birds and hamsters) to 325 households through our Pet Food Corner. Thank you to the Community Animal Rescue Effort (CARE) for their partnership and to the CARE and IPCFP volunteers who coordinate and take part in this valuable program. We are one of the only pantries to provide clients with pet food.