

BREADCRUMBS

March 2015

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

Be A Bunny for the Pantry!

The Irving Park Community Food Pantry again will be distributing Easter baskets to its clients for their children on four Wednesdays starting March 4th (Easter is April 5th). We are collecting goodies (candy, snacks, small toys, etc.) for children in the age categories of under 2, 2 to 5, and 6 to 8 years old. We will need donations throughout the month, as we often run out before the fourth week arrives.

Please drop off any donations at the Irving Park United Methodist Church (corner of Grace and Keeler - Grace Street entrance). Financial donations are extremely helpful and are used to purchase necessary supplies, especially to fill in depleted items late in the month. This can be done by mail or through PayPal at the Pantry's website (www.irvingparkfoodpantry.org). Questions can be sent to Vicci Rodgers at viccirodgers@gmail.com.

Thanks to the congregations at Irving Park United Methodist Church and Irving Park Lutheran Church for their continued support of this tradition through donations and creating baskets.



Volunteers Diana Powers and Audra Nelson prepare baskets for clients' children in 2014.



Pantry President Belma Torres and Office Manager Sandra Schwarzbeck speak during the Wall event.

Pantry Participates in Wall Event

Pantry President Belma Torres and Office Manager Sandra Schwarzbeck took part in the IPUMC's "Save the Wall" fund-raising program held in January. Both spoke at the event and then talked with attendees about the Pantry's work at a booth during the reception that followed.

The wall houses the church's magnificent stained-glass window, added during a 1960s renovation. The church is raising funds to complete repairs this spring. As the home to the Pantry for 30 years, we feel especially attached to helping the church maintain its facilities, especially as it often allows us to use its sanctuary during winter months to keep our clients out of the elements while they wait to get into the limited space we have to serve them.

To learn more about the wall's history, the needed repairs and how to donate, call the church office at 773/283-6262 or visit www.irvingparkumc.com and click on the Help Save the North Wall link in the Capital Campaign section on the right.



Mark your calendars now to join the Pantry's Hunger Walk team on June 20th for the walk at Soldier Field

Hunger Walk Coming on June 20th

Mark your calendars now for June 20th, the date of the 29th Annual Hunger Walk, sponsored by the Greater Chicago Food Depository.

The 3.1-mile (5k) walk at Soldier Field along the lakefront raises awareness and funds to help food pantries, shelters and soup kitchens throughout Chicago. Last year, the Irving Park Food Pantry raised nearly \$18,000 from the Walk, our highest total yet, and we hope to continue to grow that number, as the number of neighbors we are serving also continues to grow.

White Socks Needed for Clients

The Pantry is again in need of men's white crew socks. The socks help many of our clients, especially in the cold winter, and they receive one pair per request. If you can donate any, please bring them to the Pantry on Wednesday morning or leave them at the bottom of the stairs at the Grace Street entrance to the IPUMC during church hours, as with regular food donations

Pantry Served 1,529+ in January

In January, the Pantry served 1,529 people in 597 households, including 131 new clients in 50 households and 187 people in 68 families who came during our Tuesday night hours. We also provided pet food to 219 clients.

That total doesn't include the 70+ households who received food the first week of the month, when the high snow and low temperatures made it difficult for deliveries, volunteers and clients. Our group gave clients who braved conditions an emergency supply of on-hand food and allowed them to return later in the month for a regular distribution, making the remaining three weeks very busy!

Volunteer Spotlight: Lee Stein

Everyone at the Pantry benefits from Lee's hard work as Volunteer Manager to keep us organized and to ensure every spot is filled on Wednesday.

She was "volunteered" for the position when former manager Kate Roche announced she'd gotten a new job. "I told her that was unacceptable, she couldn't leave," Lee says. "She said she wanted me to replace her, and I said okay." Clearly she didn't know what she was getting into.

Lee was born in Old Greenwich, Conn., and grew up in Glen Ellyn. She attended the School of the Art Institute, where she got her BFA in photography in 1991. She also received her certification in massage at the Chicago School of Massage Therapy in 2000.



She first volunteered in October 2009, learning about the Pantry through the Irving Park Lutheran Church. "I was working for them part-time and I wanted to help the community in a more hands-on, tangible way so I could make more of a difference." She started as one of our first Web SNAP volunteers and also worked the closet.

"I love working with so many different people," she says. "There's a lot to organize, but working here helps me keep my perspective on life. Everyone is really dedicated, really committed to the mission. I've never seen anything like it. I feel like it's my second family here!"

Visit us on Facebook and Website

Stay current with Pantry news and events by pressing Control and then clicking on these links, which will take you directly to our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/irvingparkpantry) and our website (www.irvingparkfoodpantry.org).