

# BREADCRUMBS

August 2015

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

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## Pantry Offers School Supplies

The Irving Park Community Food Pantry has started its program to provide school supplies to our clients' children to ensure they start the school year strong. We will be providing supplies throughout the month of August. In past years, we have supplied upwards of 400 bags of supplies to neighborhood students in grades 1 through 12.

We are in need of loose-leaf paper, spiral notebooks, pocket folders, glue sticks, scissors, rulers, erasers, #2 pencils, crayons (24 pack), markers, colored pencils and pens. We do not want backpacks. We often run low as the month goes on, so replenishing our stock is always needed.



*Audra Nelson and her minions prepare school supplies for the 2014 distribution. Audra is helping to coordinate this year's distribution with several other parents from the Disney II magnet school.*

Please keep us in mind as you do your own shopping this summer. Donations can be dropped off at the bottom of the steps inside the Grace Street door of the church any time during church operating hours (call 773/283-6262 to check) or on Wednesday mornings during Pantry hours (9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.). Thank you to Erica, Audra and Michelle for coordinating this program this year!



John Psiharis welcomes new nutrition teacher Jessica Peralta (center) as Alicia Theofanis retires.

## Nutrition Classes Change Hands

In June, Alicia Theofanis from the University of Illinois Extension program retired from the program, after working with it since 1979 and running classes with the Pantry since 1994.

She will continue to volunteer at the Pantry and serve as a nutrition counselor and client resource.

The Pantry's classes now will be taught by Jessica Peralta, program assistant for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program at the University of Illinois Extension program. We look forward to working with Jessica to expand the program and continue the good work that Alicia has done in making the classes popular.

Also retiring as a Pantry volunteer is Cecilia Obret, who served as our primary Spanish translator. Cecilia served as a pastor at our sponsoring home, the Irving Park United Methodist Church. As part of their doctrine, Cecilia must not interact with church activities for two years, which includes her work on our behalf. We are sorry to see her leave and hope to see her again in the future.



*The CHUMs group works in the Pantry's garden.*

## **CHUMs Help Build Pantry Garden**

Thank you to the 14 members of the College Hill United Methodist (CHUM) service group from Wichita, Kan., who came to Chicago during the week of July 12<sup>th</sup> to do improvement projects at the Irving Park United Methodist Church, our home base.

The group helped the Pantry with preparation work on our herb garden being created on the Keeler side of the church. They also helped with other projects, including cleaning out freezers. We appreciate their service to the church, to us and to our clients!

## **Pantry's Donation Needs**

The Pantry is in need of pet food, especially cat food. We are one of only a few food pantries in the city to offer pet food to our clients, through a partnership with the Community Animal Rescue Effort (CARE). We work with a number of regular donators, but our supplies have dropped even as our list of clients wanting pet food grows. If you want to donate to the Pantry, please consider donating pet food, which we don't have access to through other sources.

We are always in need of toiletries (shampoos, soaps, razors, shaving cream, diapers, deodorants, feminine-hygiene products, toilet paper, Kleenex, toothpaste and toothbrushes). Travel-sized items are fine. We also need both men's and women's white crew socks.

We are *not* in need of canned goods at this time. Owing to various large donations and supplies received from our regular suppliers, we have an oversupply. Instead, we would very much prefer food drives focused on nonperishable dry goods (especially peanut butter, macaroni & cheese, hamburger helper-type meals, rice and pasta mixes, dried fruit and nuts, energy bars, juice, etc.) or toiletries and socks.

## **CRS Rice Bowl Aids Nutrition Class**

CRS Rice Bowl, administered through the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago, has renewed our \$1,500 grant. It allows us to fund our Nutrition classes for clients and provide them with additional foods used in the classes to prepare those meals at home for their families.

The latest series of classes were held in June and July, under the direction of instructor Alicia Theofanis from the University of Illinois Extension program, which coordinates the program. We thank volunteer Lorena De Avila for her work on this grant.

## **Thanks for Hunger Walk Support!**

Thank you to everyone who supported our efforts with the Greater Chicago Food Depository's 30th Annual Hunger Walk in June. In all, about 14,300 people walked the 3.1 miles around Soldier Field that morning to help raise awareness about food insecurity. We have not yet received the total bonus payment from GCFD, but we appreciate everyone who participated and donated to the event. We especially want to thank Carter Westminster United Presbyterian Church for their significant and generous support.



*The Pantry's team prepares to step off at the Walk.*

## **Pantry serves 1,427 in June**

In June, the Pantry served 1,427 people in 524 households, including 37 new households with 101 people and 135 people in 46 households on our Tuesday night distribution on June 10. Our volunteers helped nine households with 14 people apply for SNAP benefits.

Some 264 households received pet food for their dogs, cats, birds and hamsters through our Pet Food Corner. Thank you for all of your help in allowing us to continue to be Neighbors Helping Neighbors!