

BREADCRUMBS

November 2015

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

Pantry's Holiday Distributions Need Donations of Food, Toys

The Irving Park Community Food Pantry has begun gathering food donations for its two holiday distributions, in November and on December 16th. We are asking for contributions of funds, food and fun (i.e., books and toys) to help make the season brighter for qualifying clients (who have come to the Pantry at least three times before September) who need a hand during the holiday season.



Volunteers Craig O'Connor and Rafal Glaz help set up stations for the Holiday distribution in 2014.

In November, we provide clients during our regular weekly distributions with additional meat and trimmings for a Thanksgiving dinner. On December 16th, we'll create a special holiday distribution at which clients receive the makings for a full holiday dinner for their family. We also allow clients to select a gift for each of their children from our toy room, along with a book and small stocking toys.

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

We also need most dry goods, such as peanut butter, macaroni & cheese, crackers, dry soup mixes, energy bars and juice (100% fruit juice). Any help you can provide is greatly appreciated.



Volunteers help set up the Pantry's Toy Room prior to our Holiday distribution in 2014.

Toys Needed For Holiday Program

The Pantry provides 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 presents with their friends who receive so much more. We especially need your help this year as we will not be receiving support from the Toys for Tots program.

Gifts are especially needed for older children (age 10 to 12), especially boys, as we receive far fewer for that age group. Soccer and basketballs always are popular with this group. For books, the older boys often enjoy biographies, sports and nonfiction.

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.

For information or to volunteer, contact Sara Yuest at sara.yuest74@gmail.com.



Pet Corner volunteers Marsha Niazmand, Judi Rosenthal and Judy Horberg prepare the Pantry's Pet Food Corner to distribute pet food to clients. The Pantry needs volunteers to help pick up store donations

Pet Food Corner Needs Pick-Ups

We are the only Food Pantry in Chicago that provides pet food to our clients, and many of them take advantage of this service to feed their pets and ensure they can retain their companions during economic troubles.

A number of pet-supply stores donate to us, but we are in need of a volunteer with a vehicle and driver's license who can pick up the donations each month.

There are a variety of stores throughout the area (Pet Supplies Plus in Morton Grove and Lincolnwood and Target on Peterson, among others) that donate generously. We need people to pick up those donations and either bring them to the pantry or take them to store at the Community Animal Rescue Effort (CARE) storefront at Damen and Peterson.

The job is flexible, in that pickups can vary based on your schedule to some extent and they happen only once per month. If you can assist with this program, either doing all or some of the pickups, contact Volunteer Coordinator Lee Stein at volunteer@irvingparkfoodpantry.org or call 773/283-6296 and leave a message.

We also are in need of other pet donations, especially cat food. If you can provide any pet food of any kind, including for birds, hamsters and other pets, please bring it to the Pantry as with any other donation.

Thank you for helping to ensure our clients' pets do not suffer during their own time of struggle!

Coat Distribution a Success

Thank you to everyone who donated winter coats to our annual distribution in October. We appreciate your help in ensuring our clients stay warm through the winter.

Special thanks to the parents and students at Disney II Elementary School, especially coordinators Ia Jorjoliani and Nadia Schimmel and volunteers Ia, Renee Linnemeyer and Simona Nitu who helped clients get the right coat.



Volunteers (l-r) Simona Nitu, Ia Jorjoliani and Renee Linnemeyer organize coats during the first week of the Pantry's distribution to clients in October

Help Amazon Help The Pantry

Don't forget to use the Amazon Smile feature at Amazon when you shop for the holidays. If you use the bookmark (which doesn't change how you shop at the site) and designate the Pantry as your choice, we receive 0.5% of the price of all purchases.

Pantry Serves 1,527 in September

In September, the Pantry served 1,527 people in 549 households, including 101 new people in 44 households. Our volunteers assisted eight households with 10 people to apply for SNAP benefits online.

We also provided pet food (for dogs, cats, birds and hamsters) to 237 households through our Pet Food Corner. Thank you to CARE and all the IPCFP volunteers who take part in this valuable program. We are always in need of donations to keep up with the demand.

Thank you for your continued support of our regular distributions and our special programs. With your help, we will continue to live up to our slogan of being "Neighbors Helping Neighbors."