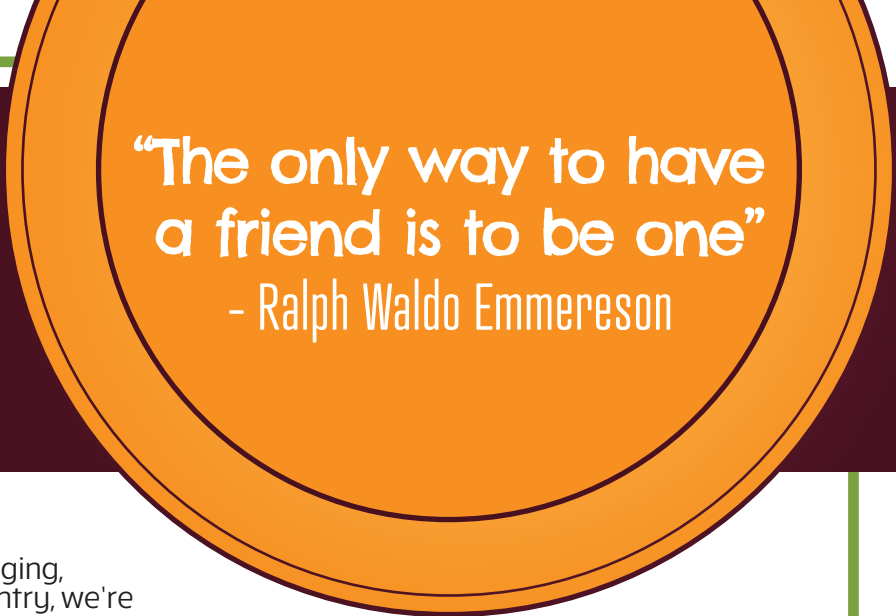


The Friendship Center Celebrates 50 Years of Feeding Our Community



JUNE 2020



“The only way to have a friend is to be one”
- Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Those four words ‘We will help you’ really meant a lot.”

- Rosemary Slaughter, North Park Covenant Church member, food pantry volunteer and former client



Rosemary Slaughter

Friends and supporters of our mission gathered in early spring at North Park Covenant Church to celebrate the "golden anniversary" of our food pantry. Our work began here with a small group of dedicated parishioners, zero operating budget, and a large closet in the pastor's office. We enjoyed hearing from volunteers past and present about the impact this organization has had on their lives and within the community.



Rev. Jim Anderson and a volunteer inspecting cans



a canned food drive from the early days

“[Our] beginnings were minuscule - it's growth and service through 50 years phenomenal... I send hearty and joyful greetings to one and all who guide and volunteer to maintain this great community” asset.”

- Rev. Jim Anderson, former pastor at North Park Covenant Church & one of our founding members

It is a lot of responsibility to carry on a legacy that goes back over 50 years. We are grateful for the hard work and dedication of many people over many years, so that we could be prepared to rise to the unique challenge of this moment.



Ross Outten, Pastor Doug Johnson, Elizabeth Johnson, Ted Helwig, & Catherine Werner at the 50th anniversary celebration

As we carry that work forward, we are thankful to each and every one of you - our friends - who have made yourselves a part of our shared mission to end hunger in our community.

Dear Friends:

The first part of 2020 has been a scary, challenging, and uncertain time for all of us. At the food pantry, we're seeing a greater need in our community than any of us can remember. There have been weeks where we worried whether we had enough food on our shelves or if we would even be able to open at all.

We are also fortunate in many ways: to have the space in our new facility to expand our operations, to have continued deliveries from the Greater Chicago Food Depository, and to have the collective support of all of you.

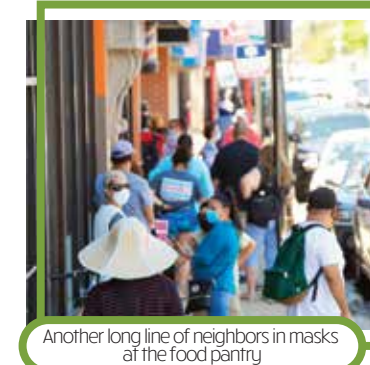
Our volunteers and donors are committing acts of bravery and kindness every day, and it is a privilege to know and work alongside such amazing friends and neighbors.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our efforts these past few months.

Sincerely,

Ross Outten, Director of Development

P.S. Please visit our website for ongoing updates to how we are operating during COVID-19 to keep everyone safe and continue delivering services.



Another long line of neighbors in masks at the food pantry



Youth from Lincoln Square Presbyterian Church hard at work



Volunteer Dan Waller with fresh fruit

BLACK LIVES MATTER.

Right now the world is grappling with systems of oppression and injustice that many of our clients live with every day. We will continue to work hard to support our community and feed the hungry. We will stand against racism, oppression, hatred, and violence. We will stand for justice, equality, hope, and love.





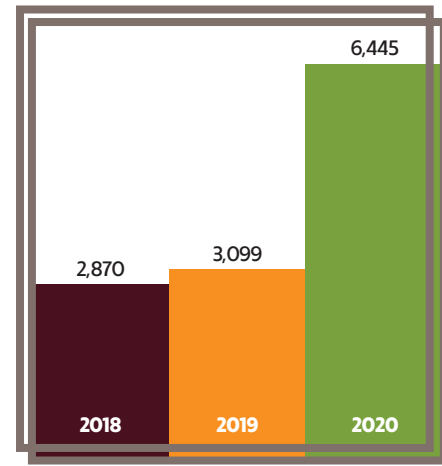
INSIDE THE PANTRY

HAPPENING NOW



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Meet John D. - he is a client who also helps us on Wednesdays when the Greater Chicago Food Depository delivery trucks come in. He's been here with us several times as we keep on breaking records for the largest single delivery in our 50 year history - our last one was 21,500 lbs! This photo is from just a couple of weeks ago. "I wasn't sure they were gonna make it today with all that's going on," he said, "but the GCFD, they are always there for us." We couldn't have said it better ourselves - we are so thankful for their continued partnership and



total individuals served in march

COVID-19 IMPACT

In 2019 we expanded our hours and experienced an overall increase in clients served of 15% over the year before. In early 2020, as we consolidated all of our operations into our new facility on Lawrence ave, we were already preparing for continued growth.

Then COVID-19 changed everything - as our numbers more than doubled in the course of a couple of weeks.

Here is a snapshot of the increase we are seeing in demand right now.

A HAIR-RAZING SUCCESS!

We'd like to say a HUGE Thank you to Kevin P. Cary, Hagen Dost, Bill Wesselink - and the whole team at both Begyle Brewing and Dovetail Brewery. We've been fundraising partners for several years now, and Mayfestiversary - held annually on Memorial Day weekend - has been a big part of our growth during that time. With events canceled this spring, and the need in our community greater than ever - we found ourselves in a tough spot.



It means a lot to us that these local business owners - who are facing challenges of their own right now - reached out to find creative ways to replace the festival experience and the lost gate revenue. Part of that effort included our "Hair Razing" FB Live event - with Kevin and Ross shaving their head and beard respectively. Between a FB fundraiser and direct donations on our website, we managed to replace more than half of the money we raised last year.

Their commitment and friendship to those most in need during this difficult time will not be soon forgotten.



NEIGHBORHOOD LOAVES

We are grateful to Floriole Bakery for supplying bread to the food pantry through the Artisan Grain Collaborative and their "Neighbor Loaves" program. Here's how it works: go to the Floriole website, order yourself some wonderful bakery goods like "bake at home" croissants or super rich brownies with cocoa nibs, and while you are there, buy a loaf of bread for us! You are helping support this wonderful small business while also providing fresh healthy bread to a family in need. We pick up the loaves in bulk once a week and distribute them to neighbors who visit our pantry.



Mona Ewing Yaeger shows off artisanal loaves from Floriole Bakery