



Hello Friend,

I began my note in the Spring Newsletter with the words “This moment at The Friendship Center is focused on growth and expansion.” At that time, we were serving 55% more neighbors facing hunger than in the prior year. But looking back, I had no idea how that trend would accelerate! Last year’s transformation, made possible by our foundational partners like Swedish Hospital and the Greater Chicago Food Depository, has allowed us to serve the community at unprecedented levels. Through our various programs, **we are on pace to support almost 50,000 seniors and families this year - over twice our 2021 levels!** With your support and advocacy, we are making tremendous progress to better serve all 70,000 people at risk of hunger in our community.

Certainly, more folks are facing hunger now with COVID-era benefits dropping off but what is driving the dramatic increase? It is our increased ability to serve more people and our enhanced connections with our community of social service organizations. Food-insecurity is a symptom of a wider set of challenges, and **The Friendship Center is now doing more to provide other vital resources needed to stabilize lives.** Read in these pages how our collaborations are creating solutions for our neighbors in addition to raising awareness of the services they can access with us.

Speaking of those services at record levels, now **volunteers have never been more important** to our mission. I’m so pleased to celebrate David, one of so many dedicated volunteers who do their part in supporting their community. Along with so many new volunteers, it’s been a privilege to welcome Catherine Norcott and Lauren Diaz to the TFC team – each is already creating impact and building capacity for our organization’s future. Read about these three awesome people in the newsletter!

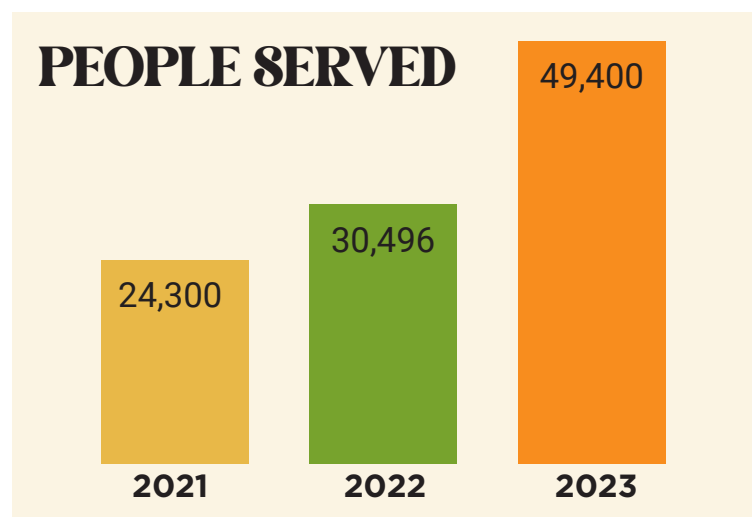
You know what else is awesome? Oktoberfestersary! Did you know our friends at Begyle Brewery and Dovetail Brewing throw a party each fall, and The Friendship Center benefits from every dollar donated at the gates. You should totally go!

**I am grateful for your interest in helping your neighbors facing hunger!**

Warmly,

Justin Block

Executive Director



# NEW FACES



Catherine Norcott (she/her) promotes food access for humans and animals as Operations Manager for Programs at The Friendship Center. A resident of West Town and printmaker with over a decade of experience working in visual art and disability organizations in Chicago, Catherine enjoys exploring natural spaces, reading, and supporting the city's vibrant visual arts community.



Lauren Diaz was born and raised in the southwest suburbs of Chicago. She earned her bachelor's in international studies with an emphasis in global health and human rights from the University of Iowa. After living and working in Uruguay for a year, she earned her master's in nonprofit management from Adler University. Lauren has ten years of nonprofit experience in various roles, but her passion has always been "fun"draising. In her free time, Lauren enjoys spending time with her family, serving on the Board at Filling the Gap NFP, grabbing coffee in a cozy coffee shop, adding stamps to her passport, and practicing her Spanish skills. Lauren is excited to join the team as the development manager and looks forward to using her skills to help feed our neighbors.



Mark your calendars for Oktoberfestiversary the weekend of October 7th-8th. Begyle Brewing and Dovetail Brewery join together for an annual block party in celebration of Begyle's 11th anniversary. We'll get together to enjoy special beers, live music, food trucks, pop-ups and kids activities - and fight hunger at the same time! Attendees are encouraged to make a \$5 donation at the gate to feed our neighbors and help us reach 2 million meals donated from the events. We hope to see you there! Check out [oktoberfestiversary.com](http://oktoberfestiversary.com)





# FINANCIAL LITERACY WORKSHOP

In partnership with the North River Commission and Wintrust Bank, recently The Friendship Center hosted an engaging Financial Health Workshop. The event, bilingually led by Wintrust Bank financial representative Jose Garcia, provided attendees with valuable insights into understanding and improving credit scores and answered general banking questions.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive; one enthusiastic teenager even remarked, "This is more fun than school!"

Since we know that food insecurity is directly related to financial insecurity and other needs, we are committed to collaborating with neighborhood partners. Providing a variety of resources and information allows us to address our mission more holistically.

Stay tuned for more upcoming workshops and events designed to enhance the lives of our neighbors facing hunger. Thanks to our partners for assisting with a great night of learning!



## MISSION IN MOTION

David, a retired social worker, serves as a shopper at the four distribution days every week. He shares, "I like the setup of The Friendship Center. There's a great selection, and it's important that people can pick out their own food."

