



# PantryPulse

NEWS FROM THE OAK PARK RIVER FOREST FOOD PANTRY

FALL 2010

## Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry

### Board of Directors

- Jamie Stanesa, President
- D. Kent Bartram, Vice President
- Donna Myers, Treasurer
- Wendy Epstein, Secretary
- J. Peter Clark
- Collete English Dixon
- Bob Haisman
- Bernard D. Headlin II
- Kathryn Jandeska
- Mignon McPherson Nance
- Rose Mabwa
- Linda Stephens

### Pantry Staff

- Kathy Russell
- Executive Director
- Michele Zurakowski
- Director of Operations
- Kristi Braun
- Volunteer Manager
- Paula Berg
- Pantry Manager

### HOURS

**Every Saturday:**  
9:00 am – 12:00 pm

**1st Wed. of the month:**  
7:00 – 8:30 pm

**2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th  
Wednesdays  
of the month:**  
3:30 – 5:00 pm

## Serving others while being served

Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry serves a broad community of clients, each with a story, and many with a desire to give back. This is the story of the Grahams.

Diana and George Graham have lived in the same house in Chicago's Austin neighborhood for four decades. (Smiling, Diana says: "And we paid off the mortgage 20 years ago!") A retired factory foreman, George was diagnosed with Alzheimer's in 2002. Soon after, the couple found themselves raising a grandson, when their 23-year old son died of kidney failure.



With these burdens it can be hard to make ends meet, which is how the Grahams came to be Pantry clients. But their burdens don't keep them from reaching out to help others, which is how the Grahams came to be Pantry volunteers.

Diana and George assist neighborhood seniors and volunteer with CAPS (Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy). Diana also serves as her Block Club President. She and George volunteer at the Pantry three or four times a month, which also helps keep George active and involved with his community. Fellow volunteers are always grateful for his welcoming smile and the twinkle in his eye.



Diana says there are many reasons she's happy to be both a client and a volunteer at the Pantry, among them the fresh dairy and meat we provide, the waiting areas that are out of the elements, and friendly and helpful staff and volunteers. She also mentions the importance of our regular evening distribution – many of our clients work or go to school, and being able to access our services later in the day can make all the difference.

The Pantry is lucky to have found Diana and George, who do so much to support the Pantry in return.

*Working together to provide hunger relief in our community.*

## Pantry moves to “client choice”

Is there any food you just hate? Of course you do. Some people hate spinach and some loathe beans. Some people love peas while others prefer carrots. We all recognize that tastes vary as wildly as waist size. But is it possible to accommodate individual tastes at a food pantry? Right now, clients at Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry receive a standard allotment of pre-packaged non perishable foods and make their own selections of meat, dairy and fresh produce. That will change in October when we become a full-fledged Client Choice pantry.

“Client Choice” means we will invite clients to choose ALL their own food—all the perishables AND the non-perishables. Providing food in a manner that is more respectful of the diversity and personal dignity of our clients is at the heart of this change. A task force of volunteers, staff and board members has been busy for months touring other facilities and learning about the best ways of implementing a client choice system. We’ll be rolling it all out on Saturday, October 2nd. Clients and volunteers alike are eagerly awaiting the changes.

These changes are made possible by an award from AT&T, a grant from the Kraft Feeding Possibilities Program via the Greater Chicago Food Depository, and gifts honoring the memory of Beth Drews.

Now is a great time to visit the Pantry... see your donation dollars put to use, decide if volunteering at the Pantry is a possibility for you,

client choice

# True generosity

It’s common practice for businesses to give gifts to clients at the Holidays. But true generosity is when you give and expect nothing back. We have been on the receiving end of this true spirit of giving for years: the donor is **Aria Group Architects**.

Founder and principal, Jim Lencioni explained that a number of years ago the company made a decision to bypass gifts to clients at the Holidays and instead make donations to various charities. As to why our Pantry has been selected as a recipient of Aria largesse for years, Jim points out, “Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry was chosen to receive a gift from Aria because it is a really good cause and serves a broad need in the community.”

Located in Oak Park for 20 years, Aria Group Architects is an architecture, interior design, and planning firm specializing in restaurant, hospitality, and entertainment projects. They are licensed in 40 states and have worked in Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

Thank you Aria Group Architects for your generosity.



Saturday morning clients  
photo courtesy of Charlie Mayer

## Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry

January - August 2010

- Over 8,000 families served
- Visits to the Pantry are up 30% compared to 2009
- The Pantry assisted 179 clients with filing for SNAP benefits (food stamps)
- 342 volunteer slots are filled each month
- 74 people walked in the Hunger Walk for the Pantry’s team
- Pantry staff made presentations to 12 schools, youth or community groups
- Over 400 people gave a monetary gift and over 200 gifts of food were given

about us



• 336,000 pounds of food distributed  
photo courtesy of Charlie Mayer

or learn a bit about hunger in our community and how you can help.

Kathy Russell, Executive Director

## The Pantry welcomes the following NEW DONORS:

Mike & Kathy Altman  
Frank & Sandra Atilano  
Andres Bacalao  
Dina Barron  
Paula & Paul Berg  
Robert Burchill  
Phyllis Cardenas  
Sheila & Steven Carson  
CNA Foundation  
Doris Courts  
Mary Alice Dacosse  
James & Christina Darley  
Elizabeth Davis  
Michelle De Leo  
Rosemary Dineen  
Rosanne Druian  
Susan Elster  
Linda Flack  
Geraldine Fox  
Vivian Goeb  
L. R. Green  
Eva & William Heath  
Shirley Hermes  
Rosa Hill  
Phyllis Hindery  
Karen Horace  
Denise Jacob  
Mary James  
Kathryn Jandeska  
Sharon Jenkins  
Jakeel & Betty Johnson  
Catherine Klostermann  
Vicky Lekovich  
Nancy Leonard

Rose Mabwa  
Elizabeth P. Martin  
Grace & Christopher Masi  
Charlaine & Patrick Mc Anany  
Metropolitan Synodical  
Women's Organization  
Joann Moles  
Anita Peterson  
John & Joan Rodriguez  
Mary Ann Rosso  
Donna Rowsell  
Dan Sak  
Mary Jane Sapko  
Mark & Evelyn Segal  
Patricia Simpson  
Winifred Smedley  
Patricia Smuck  
Eli & Jeanne Stanesa  
Jamie Stanesa  
Christine & David Stannard  
Katherine Stohr  
Elizabeth Streb  
Barbara Tasker  
Judith & Verner Tepe  
Kurt & Elizabeth Thiesing  
Tamara Tolliver  
Courtenay Savage &  
Jerry Van Polen  
Marian & James Wallenda  
Terry & Leslie Walter  
Erica Warrior  
Yvette Wesley  
Yuko Yamamoto

# Faithful friends



photo courtesy of Kathy Russell

Pantry volunteers in high gear during a distribution shift.

When Becky and Timothy Doar read in the local newspaper that the Pantry was opening a new shift on Wednesday afternoons, Becky signed up to volunteer. Soon her son Spencer was volunteering with her. In those days—all of six years ago—a typical Wednesday found the

Doars serving 20 families. Becky felt their need keenly, sometime walking home in tears as she contemplated a life without enough food to feed your children. Such thoughts propelled Becky to further involvement with the Pantry: in addition to volunteering, she began to make financial contributions to the Pantry as well. The Doars have been faithful financial and volunteer donors since then. As a volunteer, Becky sees right where her money goes. She is impressed with the Pantry's ability to serve increased numbers of clients—now her Wednesday shift serves over 100 families each week. And she is especially happy that families receive fresh produce, 2 servings of meat and 2 servings of dairy each time they come to the Pantry.

## ANNUAL GIRL SCOUT FOOD DRIVE

October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2010

Hundreds of Girl Scouts will be going door to door in Oak Park and River Forest on Saturday, October 9th. But this time they won't be selling cookies. This time they will be collecting food donations for Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry. The largest service project for the area's Girl Scouts, organizers are determined to gather more food than last year's 40,000 pounds. Please leave donations in a bag outside your door after 9 a.m. on Saturday, October 9, and mark your contributions, "Food Pantry." Tax-deductible monetary contributions are also appreciated. Please make checks payable to Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry.

help us



Emily carries in GS food drive donations.

# Pantry Pulse

The Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry's mission is to work together with the community to reduce hunger locally through

- direct hunger relief services
- hunger awareness education and advocacy to influence anti-hunger policy.



photo courtesy of Charlie Mayer

Freemont and his grandson wait their turn at a busy Saturday Pantry

**Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry**  
First United Church of Oak Park  
848 Lake Street  
Oak Park, IL 60301

Nonprofit Organization  
US Postage Paid  
Permit # 190  
Oak Park IL

## Pantry effort at Hunger Walk breaks all records

On a blazing Saturday morning in June, volunteers and staff from Oak Park River Forest Food Pantry took to the lakeshore in the 2010 Greater Chicago Food Depository's (GCFD) Hunger Walk. One of the unique aspects of the Hunger Walk is that 100% of funds raised go directly to the participating groups. Any money we raise for the Walk goes right into our GCFD "checking account" for food.



Rachel and her dad, David, at the finish line.

photo courtesy of Kathy Russell

As we planned our participation, we had two goals in mind: to recruit 31 walkers, and to raise a total of \$5,500. We're happy to report that we surpassed both goals. With 74 walkers, we were able to raise a record-setting \$16,635 in donations, an amount that will make a real difference to the thousands of families we serve in our community.

At a time when food insecurity is on the rise, when one in four American children lives in a house without sufficient food, we are very grateful to all of the Hunger Walk participants. To our regular volunteers, our staff, our Board members, and all the people in Oak Park and River Forest who donate time and funds whenever they can –THANK YOU—it's because of you that we're able to provide hunger relief in our community.



Team Pantry

photo courtesy of Kathy Russell

### Thank you for your support!

## How to help feed your community

- DONATE** via check or PayPal at [www.oprffoodpantry.org](http://www.oprffoodpantry.org)
- VOLUNTEER** click the "Sign Up To Volunteer" button on our website [www.oprffoodpantry.org](http://www.oprffoodpantry.org)
- PLAN AN EVENT** organize a food drive for your birthday party, block party, congregation, or child's school
- EDUCATE** email [info@oprffoodpantry.org](mailto:info@oprffoodpantry.org) to coordinate a presentation by Pantry staff for your congregation, club, workplace or child's school

# hunger walk

## help us