

Elmhurst-Yorkfield Food Pantry

Food, Compassion, Hope

COVID-19 Ushers in New Procedures

On March 11, 2020 the Novel Coronavirus Disease, COVID-19, was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. Two days later, a national emergency was declared in the United States. EYFP had to work fast to keep their clients and volunteers safe. This was no easy feat. Protocols were changing daily, PPE was difficult to find, and fear was the leading emotion. Decisions had to be made under considerable pressure. EYFP continued to operate with great volunteers adapting quickly to the many changes.

Proactive Response

EYFP decided to limit client contact INSIDE the pantry before the state mandated shutdown. Instead, volunteers pre-packed groceries and safely placed the bags into open trunks. This allowed for social distancing among the volunteers and clients. Unfortunately, it did not allow for the client to pick their groceries to fit their tastes and needs. EYFP was also the first local food pantry to return to client choice while still social distancing. While remaining in their vehicle, the client checks in and fills out the order form. This form is updated after every shift to reflect the current inventory. Volunteers record the order and hand it off to personal shoppers who then fulfill the order. The shopper brings the groceries to the waiting vehicle and places the bags in the trunk.

Check out our new video at <https://www.eyfp.org/videos>

Did you know?

When the schools were closed by the Governor, EYFP was able to step in and help District 205 families who were coping with food scarcity. EYFP provided three mobile food pantries at the Churchville Junior High parking lot. The pantry was also able to establish dedicated distribution days for District 205 families.

Are you aware?

EYFP has not missed a client shift or distribution since the onset of the pandemic.

Can you believe?

The number of new client registrations has tripled since March. The pandemic and lockdown orders have created a drastic increase in unemployment.

The decision to visit a food pantry is often difficult. Between perceived stigma and misconception about how it works, many people do not seek the assistance they need.

MYTH VS. FACT

Myth:

You have to be unemployed or your children must receive free or reduced lunch to be eligible for pantry services.

Fact:

Many of our clients are underemployed and do not qualify for any type of government assistance. They make "just enough" to not qualify.

A sad but true reality - Single, working moms often do not receive reliable child support from their children's father.

Many of our seniors are on fixed incomes and often have to choose between food or renewing a needed prescription.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: Bob Cieslak

Bob has lived in Elmhurst for 16 years. He became aware of the pantry when the new building was under construction. His first donation was in the form of money and eventually began to donate his time. He has been volunteering at the pantry for approximately 1 ½ years and is one of our recovery van drivers. He also manages inventory, works a client shift every week, restocks shelves. He steps in and drives the recovery van any day there is no other volunteer. In the last 5 ½ months, Bob has averaged about 100 volunteer hours per month. He says, "The people keep me coming back. The leadership, other volunteers and the diverse clientele."



"If you want to eliminate hunger, everybody has to be involved." ~ Bono



(Above) Janet confirms the client’s registration using our new handheld check-in, while Tanya prepares the order form for the client to select their food preferences. (Right) A volunteer shopper places the client’s groceries in the back of their vehicle.



(Above) Personal shoppers are busy fulfilling orders based on the client’s selections.

(Right) The new COVID-19 Prevention sign to remind clients about our PPE requirements.



By the Numbers (Jan thru Sept)

Unique households served: 1292

Children: 1,533

Seniors: 833

Total: 4,822

Food Distributed:

Meals: 302,520

Milk: 5,437 gallons

Eggs: 5,042 dozen

Produce: 132,535 pounds

Volunteers:

Total: 460

Hours: 10,867 hours

Communities Served:

Elmhurst, Addison, Bensenville, Berkeley, Hillside, Lombard, Oakbrook, and Villa Park

Thanks to all of our donors and volunteers - past and present - for your tremendous support. We could not fulfill our mission to provide Food, Compassion, and Hope without YOU.

Kathie Watts, Executive Director



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