



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Hope Community Food Pantry Marks 10 Years of Operations in Old Norwood Park

“Fighting hunger since 2004” through the work of volunteers and community support

CHICAGO – On Sunday, October 26th 2014, 85 volunteers, friends, and family members gathered to kick off a year-long recognition of making a difference on the Northwest Side for 10 years. Attendees shared a meal, shared photos and trivia, all highlighting the importance of all of the facets of volunteerism that allow the pantry to fulfill its stated mission, “Seeking to feed the hungry and sharing resources to improve the quality of life of those in need.”

Drive through the bucolic neighborhood surrounding New Hope Community United Methodist Church on a leafy far Northwest Side side street on any Tuesday morning at 9 AM. An orderly line of people wait patiently outside the church for the side door to open at 9:30 sharp. Some of those people arrived at 4 AM to wait.

This weekly wait has become a reality every Tuesday since New Hope Community Food Pantry served its first clients in mid-November 2004. A small army of volunteers from surrounding Chicago neighborhoods, Nilas, Mount Prospect, Park Ridge, and Des Plaines work Mondays and Tuesdays to unload food deliveries, check expiration dates, sort donations, and stock shelves. Volunteers greet each of the 65-80 clients who visit each Tuesday with a smile and guide them through the shopping process designed to allow them to leave with a 3-5 day supply of emergency food each has chosen for his/her family. Limited supplies of personal care items, pet food, and donated clothing are also available.

Since opening its doors just before Thanksgiving 2004, New Hope Community Food Pantry has served more than 20,000 families representing approximately 70,000 people. Thanks to the generosity of local churches, businesses, and individuals, the food pantry stayed open through the darkest days of the economic downturn and served more people in need than ever before. To date, the highest number of people served in a single month occurred in November 2013, when 1801 individuals were served. Compared with the 112 people served in November 2005, this is an increase of over 1500%. The food pantry expects to serve a similar number of people in November 2014. Demand for emergency food among our service area is not decreasing--while the cost of food is increasing. This is the reality facing every food pantry in the US, according to the 2014 Hunger in America report published by Feeding America in September.

Several initiatives are now underway to ensure that New Hope Community Food Pantry continues to offer everyone who lines up outside the church a choice of food they will use. Food drives in the community help replenish pantry shelves, and monetary gifts help the pantry fulfill its mission. As a Greater Chicago Food Depository agency, New Hope Community Food Pantry is able to purchase bulk food at discounted rates. These efforts are especially important this time of year to help fill the holiday bags that will be distributed to clients on Saturday, November 22 and Saturday, December 23. A gift of \$25 provides a holiday food basket for a family of 4. A gift of \$10 to coincide with the food pantry's 10th year will help purchase all of the following items:

- 36 fruit cups
- 24 boxes of macaroni and cheese
- 240 cups of yogurt
- 12 packages of pre-cooked ribs

Rev. Marilyn Doering, Director, reflected on the 10-year mark, “We are immensely grateful to have such amazing support from our host church, from other congregations, from the larger community, and from our tireless volunteers. We faced some tough times, but we have always been able to help every single person who found us. We will continue to be in Old Norwood Park for as long as we are needed.”

ABOUT NEW HOPE COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

New Hope Community Food Pantry, is a volunteer-driven, community-supported nonprofit food pantry that serves a 3-5 emergency food supply to those in need. Located in the Old Norwood Park neighborhood, our service area includes residents of the 60630, 60631, 60646, and 60656 ZIP codes. Our service hours are Tuesdays between 9:30 am and 11:30 am. The food pantry, which served its first clients in November 2014, is located inside New Hope United Methodist Church at **7115 W. Hood Avenue, Chicago, IL 60631**. To learn more about events, services for clients, donation needs, volunteer opportunities, or to make an online donation, please visit us at <http://newhopefoodpantry.weebly.com>. Find us on Twitter (@nhcfp_chicago.)