



ANNUAL LETTER

December 2022



You can't pour from an empty cup AND you can't eat from an empty plate.

Dear Supporter,

Most folks have heard of the first part of this idiom. However, I took some creative liberties with it and added the last part. Why did I do that? Isn't it complete in meaning as is? I don't believe it is. Let me explain why.

Food pantries, like just about everything else, were altered by the experience of the pandemic. Our leadership team was compelled to rethink every aspect of how, why, when, and where we operate. Even as our environments and communities have returned to normal, the effects of this intensive reframing effort are still guiding our path forward. While the core of our mission is still to provide food assistance to families, we are also focused on how we, as a consistent resource for well-being, can help overall improve the community we serve.

Early in 2022, I began participating, on behalf of the pantry, in a cohort through Northern Illinois Food Bank. The initiative of the cohort was to focus on improving neighbor-centric practices within our organizations. Throughout the months of participating in this group, I learned many things and met some wonderful people – everyone was very open and generously shared their ideas, practices, and challenges. With all the dialogue and discussion, it became clear that collectively, our organizations are doing way more than providing food. We are also providing everything that is the effect of having consistent access to a variety of food. While some of these effects are not *quantitative*, they certainly promote the *quality* of life – starting with the individual, then the family, and finally, our community at large. Here's just a few of those effects:

♥ ENERGY (mental & physical)

♥ RESILIENCY

♥ SELF-CONFIDENCE

♥ POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE

♥ STRESS REDUCTION

♥ SELF-RELIANCE

♥ IMPROVED SELF-IMAGE

♥ BETTER SLEEP

♥ IMPROVED IMMUNITY

♥ OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK

So yes, we help fill plates with food. But just like the cup in the idiom above, it is not really about what is in the cup, but instead the effects of having a full cup. And, yes, we use the dollars you donate to



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purchase food for our neighbors; but hopefully now you see the benefits with a wider lens than just the food on their plates. **Please make a year-end gift to the D300 Food Pantry. If you prefer to donate online, the link on our website goes through PayPal (www.d300foodpantry.org).** Donating through our Facebook page is a great option too (no fees!). Together, we can continue *KEEPIN' THE KIDS FED* while ultimately nurturing a healthier, happier, and stronger community!

Also, on behalf of our Board of Directors, our Leadership Team, and all our other AMAZING volunteers, we wish you and your family a happy holiday season and a ridiculously amazing 2023 filled with love, good health, prosperity, and plentiful reasons to be incredibly grateful!

With Deep Appreciation for Your Support,
Leslie LaMarca, Executive Director

We recently conducted a survey with our neighbors to get their thoughts on a few things as we plan for the future. We were very touched by their overwhelming sense of gratitude. As a 100% volunteer-run organization, we truly value this feedback. And, knowing that our hard work and dedication is appreciated is the icing on the cake! Below are a few of their comments in response to the question, "How do you feel about the D300 Food Pantry?"



I feel confident going to the pantry. My children will have what they need.

I feel happy that I can take food home to my house.

The workers that you have are very kind and respectful. I like the enthusiastic way we are received.

Very happy that they help me with food for my family. My kids love to select food at the pantry.

I feel happy to receive so many good things for my family.

I feel thankful for the staff and the volunteers. Showing so much love to others. Also providing information about clothing drives or preschool or birth to 3 programs and other programs from the community. The food pantry has helped me with school supplies, Christmas gifts, and Thanksgiving food. Once again, from the bottom of my heart, thank you.

Everything is well organized and the staff is very kind. Thanks for helping us.

Everyone is friendly and I like to be able to select my products.

