

June, 2023

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Healthy Food, Healthy Families





We all know a healthy diet includes lots of fruits and vegetables. At our pantry, through partnerships with the Chicago Food Depository and local gardens, we are happy that we can regularly provide our families with a selection of fresh produce.

Here is Mickey, one of our volunteers, scooping and bagging new potatoes. Also, on the table are tomatoes, mangoes, strawberries, and other produce.

As you can see in the next picture, although it's only June, fresh lettuce is on the menu. Through a partnership with the U of I Extension Master Gardeners and the Lake Katherine Nature Center, these folks are helping families in need by growing and donating food.

By working together, we are all helping keep families healthy.



Fasco Fasteners, a local company that provides

fasteners and components to the automotive, furniture, and many other industries, held a food drive for the month of May, benefiting Operation Blessing. Their family of employees bought and collected over 600 pounds of food for our clients. We want to thank them all, and may God continue to bless them.

While the arrival of summer for some children means joy at the prospect of no school and days playing in the sun, for too many of the families we serve, it brings up different emotions. Many rely on schools and after-school programs to provide at least one meal a day for their children. And so, when school is out, losing that free resource creates an added worry and uncertainty for parents struggling to keep up with basic expenses. Especially when food prices are still high, SNAP benefits have returned to their normal levels, and the fate of many after-school programs that serve about 270,000 Illinois students is uncertain.

Sadly, the result is many of these children become at risk of going hungry. Not only during the summer break, but for many months after.

It is simply unacceptable that any child in our country would ever have to go hungry. Yet, one in four households with children (23%) in the Chicagoland area were food insecure during March to mid April 2023, according to data collected by Dr. Diane Schanzenbach, an economist at Northwestern University and a board member of the The Greater Chicago Food Depository. Nationally and locally, communities of color are disproportionately affected. During the same time frame, 33% of black households with children, 32% of Latino households with children, and 15% of white households with children experienced food insecurity in the Chicagoland area.

This sad reality makes us at Operation Blessing more grateful for the support of friends like you, and the partners featured in our newsletters, partners like Fasco Fasteners, mentioned in this month's Newsletter. While there is much more work to be done, we deeply appreciate the support that many of you have shown over the years as we've worked together.

Wishing you all a safe and healthy summer. May God continue to bless you.



Our official date to reopen and move all distribution inside is August 15, 2023.

It has been three years since we've welcomed our clients inside, and we are excited to have a set date to do just that.

While we begin the shift back to normal operations, we are sure that we will have some mistakes, and errors along the way.

So we just ask for everyone's patience as we start the process.

May Statistics

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	Heads of Households	783	
	Individuals	2558	
	Professions of Faith	4	
	New clients	119	
	Prayed with	466	

