

Email to Pastor Chuck from Marillac Family Services in Chicago, IL

June 26, 2023

Re: Lives in Chicago have been changed because of your youth

Dear Dr. Wilson,

Thank you for loaning your high school + youth to us this past week. Our neighbors who complete their food needs at the MSV Food Pantry are already asking when these amazing young people will be coming back. Miss Vicki, a long-time, dedicated volunteer who supervised some of the group, said these “kids” are the best; fun, and refreshing to both her Spirit and the work she does each week at the pantry. She too extends a warm, and firm, invitation to come back, soon. (The group will get the “firm” comment.)

For my part, they made my job easy. After a short tour, safety talk, and training, they jumped right in, restocking shelves, sorting food rescue items, unloading trucks, helping our neighbors select the food they needed, and entertaining us. It’s not often we have line dancing during a pantry session. There was no job too small or big for each of them. The most common phrase coming from each was “What’s next?” They anticipated our neighbor’s needs, and acted on what was needed to help provide food and more important, a friendly conversation and connection with each neighbor. Some definite instant friendships were created.

I’ll share only one story of many. While talking with the group about food insecurity, I mentioned that food-insecure families really struggle to purchase hygiene, personal care, and other paper products, as SNAP and other assistance programs only allow for edible items to be provided. At the time we were out of stock for most hygiene items. These paper products are also expensive. The next morning, the group arrived with many bags of feminine and other hygiene products. A truly heart-opening and breaking moment for me.

They themselves, their parents, You, and the Matthews Congregation can be very proud of the work and impression your youth and leaders left here. They are the talk of the Garfield Park neighborhood.

My hope is that this is just the beginning of a long relationship.

Please share this with your congregation, as we feel so fortunate to have had the opportunity to be ministered to by this amazing group of people.



Bob Joynt

Food Services Specialist

Marillac Family Services

2859 W. Jackson, Chicago, IL 60612

517-206-0347 c/t 773-584-4566 o