



EXODUS PARTNERSHIP WITH FOOD PANTRY FOCUSES ON REFUGEES

When friends at First Presbyterian Church in Glen Ellyn approached the Glen Ellyn Food Pantry a year ago with an opportunity to help provide groceries for refugee families, the Pantry jumped at the chance.

Refugees primarily from Afghanistan, Burma, Congo, Eritrea, Iraq, Sudan and Syria have relocated to Glen Ellyn and Wheaton, IL, and are clients of Exodus World Service. The partnership launched on May 14, 2020 with 80 families when refugee needs in DuPage County due to the pandemic exceeded Exodus' budget.

The food provided by the Pantry not only helped Exodus conserve its financial resources, but provided refugee families with culturally-appropriate groceries, freeing up their finances for other necessities such as rent, doctors' visits, transportation and day-care. Today, more than 150 families are provided groceries once a month.

Here's how the program works:

On the day of service, the Northern Illinois Food Bank delivers pre-ordered food to the Pantry where it is sorted, packed by volunteers and delivered to First Presbyterian in Wheaton. (see photo below).

At the church, the food is sorted in bags and boxes for each family. Exodus augments the food provided by the Pantry with additional groceries purchased at a local grocery store, including diapers, to accommodate the specific needs of the families.

Those groceries are then packed into another group of volunteers' vehicles and delivered to refugee families at their apartment buildings or residences in the area. While delivering the food, Exodus representatives conduct a brief wellness check to ensure the safety of the families. More than 25 staff and volunteers make the operation possible.

