

Glen Ellyn Food Pantry opens larger new home amid greater demand



BY SARA MACHI
SEPTEMBER 8, 2023 / 4:53 PM / CBS CHICAGO



CHICAGO (CBS) -- As food pantries in DuPage County continue to struggle to keep up with demand, one provider has said they can now serve a lot more people thanks to a big move to a new home.

There might be no more fitting place for Glen Ellyn Food Pantry leaders to work on their mission than an historic 100-year-old building: a former parsonage – residence for church staff – renovated by capital campaign funds to create 6,000 square feet of food pantry storage and grocery aisles.

"Our motto, that we've had since the beginning, is making hunger history," said Glen Ellyn Food Pantry executive director Laura Glaza.

Jodi Krush came through the aisles this week with her 13-year-old daughter, Bea Barzo.

"I think it's amazing that we get to pick out our own food," Bea said.

It's a service they've come to rely on, after a back injury put Krush out of work.

"It definitely fills in that gap," Krush said.

Even though Glen Ellyn is in their name, the food pantry will help anyone who works, lives, or goes to school in DuPage County. Glaza said the need for that is often a lot bigger than local residents might realize.

"The need is greater than ever. Stimulus checks are gone. SNAP benefits are back down to normal. So we've – already for the first half of the year – seen 350 more families than we saw last year. So 350 new neighbors have stopped by," she said.



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Numbers in every category are up; pantry leaders said they gave out 200,000 pounds of fresh produce in 2022, and are on track to distribute 300,000 this year, with the space to grow even further.

"It was a little crowded before, so now we have all the space to do whatever we are trying to do," volunteer Carol Hammons said.

However, more space and more clients drive the need for their next challenge: more volunteers.

Food pantry staff said they specifically need volunteers for parking lot patrol, since there's now more space between the building and cars. A lot of their clients need help getting groceries loaded into their cars.

