



## Fall/Winter 2022 Newsletter

### Dear Friends,

A hot meal. Warm socks. A kind word. These might seem like small things...until you don't have them, and then they are huge.

As the weather turns and the holidays are upon us, it's a good time to ask what we each can do to help people for whom having "small things" is a daily struggle. And in Chicago, like other cities across the country, more and more people are facing that struggle.



**It's impossible not to notice the increasing number of tents set up in more parks and underpasses throughout our city. The increasing number of people on the street who appear to have nowhere to go, and nowhere else to sleep.**

The HMIS system is a database the City of Chicago uses to collect and organize specific data on people experiencing homelessness and the housing and homeless services that they receive. It showed that in the third quarter of 2022, there was a 14% increase in the number of active cases compared to 2021.

It's also a fact there are fewer shelter beds than ever before, due to new standards imposed by Covid. And even less room for care in emergency rooms—the "shelters of last resort"—as hospitals grapple with staff shortages and new waves of people needing critical care for Covid, RSV and other serious illnesses.

What difference can any one person make? Well, in the lives of people who struggle to have even the "small things," the answer is: **The difference you can make is HUGE.**

It's simple: Give what you can. When you can. This holiday season, and beyond. Because people experiencing homelessness and food insecurity aren't just seasonal, and neither should giving back be.

We at CHI are especially grateful to all our supporters and volunteers who have stepped up throughout this year to sponsor and serve our meals, make and distribute bag meals, assist our guests with housing and job leads, share knowledge, and provide comfort, care and friendship in a city that can sometimes seem indifferent, or overwhelmed. Please, let's work together to continue making a positive difference in each other's lives.

I hope you'll take a few minutes to read on for our latest news and ways you can support our mission and our programs during the holidays and in the new year.

Thank you for all you do!

*Doug F*

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**\*We are seeking meal sponsors and volunteer servers for 2023!\***

**To sign up, please [visit our website and fill out the contact form.](#)**

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### **Seeking Volunteers for New Foundations Program**

**CHI's New Foundations Program** connects our guests to resources that can contribute to greater independence and resiliency. During our Wednesday meals, the program enables any guest to apply for **Medicaid and SNAP benefits**, get placed on the city's **housing lists**, qualify for a **free cell phone**, obtain a new **State ID**, and apply for **rental and utility assistance**.



Often, the barriers our guests face are simply access to a computer and a patient, skilled assistant to help with the often tiresome application process. **Thanks to our volunteers, our guests get the help they need to successfully complete the application process.**

**We are now expanding our New Foundations Program to other partner organizations**—typically churches who offer similar meals to ours—and **need more volunteers to sign up** and help our partners during the week.

**We are especially in need of Spanish-speaking volunteers on Tuesday mornings.**

No previous experience with these applications is needed—just a willingness to learn and a desire to support our neighbors in need in accessing resources in the community.

**If you can spare a few hours a week and want to help our guests access the services they need to thrive, please email CHI at [info@chicagohelpinitiative.org](mailto:info@chicagohelpinitiative.org) for more information.**

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### **Calling All Tutors!**

CHI is seeking creative, dedicated volunteers to assist with our **adult learning programs**. If you like to **read and discuss** stories and books, **teach basic chess** moves, facilitate a **creative writing** workshop or help people **hone their computer skills**, we'd like to hear from you.



Our hour-long adult learning groups convene prior to our weekly Wednesday meals from 2-3 pm and 3-4pm in the dining room at Catholic Charities.

For more information about becoming a tutor in our adult learning programs, please email Cecelia Burokas at [caburokas@gmail.com](mailto:caburokas@gmail.com) or call her at (773) 771-4025.



### Our Warm Clothing Drive is On! Can You Host a Collection Box?

Baby, it's cold outside! And many of our guests are in need of warmer outerwear to brave the winter months.

**CHI is seeking volunteers to host Collection Boxes** at local businesses, workplaces, houses of worship and other locations that are convenient for people to drop off donations. We can provide you with a box, signage and pick up of items.

**We need: Winter coats \* Gloves and Mittens \* Hats and Face Warmers \* Scarves \* Warm Socks (new only, please)**

**\*Share the Warmth! To host a collection box, please drop us a line at [info@chicagohelpinitiative.org](mailto:info@chicagohelpinitiative.org)\***



### Make the Season Brighter for Our Guests: Support CHI's Holiday Bazaar

There is still time left to donate merchandise to our Sixth Annual Holiday Bazaar, to be held in-person! on Wednesday, December 7th in the dining room at Catholic Charities, 721 N. Lasalle St.

We're in need of clean, gently used or new items that will make great gifts. We're particularly seeking [unused] men's and women's toiletries, men's and women's clothing accessories, jewelry, toys and games for children and adults, and small housewares.

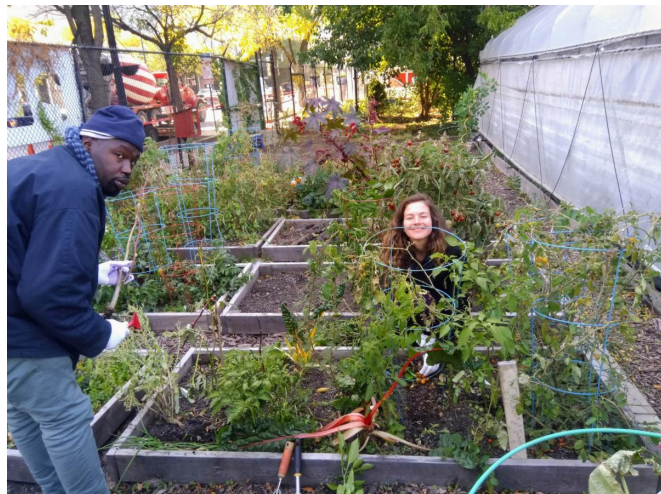
Donations will be accepted at Catholic Charities on December 6th from 9am - 4pm. We are also needing volunteers to help sort and price the items (from 5 to 25 cents).

**Please contact Jean Eisenman for more details at [jtse@ameritech.net](mailto:jtse@ameritech.net)**

### CHI Garden Harvest

This summer, CHI volunteers and guests enjoyed tending to two community garden plots at **Chicago Lights Urban Farm in River North**. On Thursday afternoons, a small group of guests, volunteers, and Annie, CHI's social worker, gathered in the garden to care for their crops while surrounded by the respite of the farm and gardens amidst the busyness of the city.

Many of our guests have shared



memories of gardening as children and brought their passion, wisdom and experience that made the garden a great success. Our gardening group was able to harvest lots of lettuce, tomatoes, zucchini, and herbs throughout the season!



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**Shout Out to Our New Meal Partners in 2022!**



**inspiration**  
kitchens

