

2020 – 2021 District Grant Final Report

Final reports are due within 30 days of the project ending, and no later than June 1, 2020. Please complete this form by filling in the fields below. You must also provide a scanned copy of valid Proof of Payment (PoP) for all expenses listed. Acceptable PoPs include: cancelled checks, bank statements, bonafide itemized receipts. Once you have completed the report, please save it as a pdf document at <http://www.matchinggrants.org/district/> on the Documents tab of the project page before clicking the “Reported” button on the Administration page.

Rotary Club Chicago Little Village _____ **District Grant #** __P-3373_____

Project Title Spanish Community Pantry _____

- Briefly describe the project. What was done, when and where did project activities take place, and who were the beneficiaries? List any changes that might have occurred.
In the Spring of 2020 with the Covid 19 virus raging, the Little Village Hispanic community lost jobs. They predominantly work as entrepreneurs with their own small taco shop, or other small businesses out of their homes or in front line jobs in restaurants, hospitals, schools, construction or factories. When these businesses had to close or limit personnel, they lost their income to support their generally large and young families. All the food pantries in Little Village coordinated so that food was available for pickup at least 5 days per week.
- How many Rotarians participated in the project? 7 participated in the decision making. 4 went on site for the first one(Len Dominguez, Sheila Ryan Henry and her husband Robert Henry, and Alicia Ruiz) and , 3 for the second(Len Dominguez, Dan Arce and Leo Rios) and one person (Len Dominguez) to the final one.
- What did they do? Please give at least 2 examples. First we researched which pantries were available and what they did. We chose Amor de Dios, because it is well known and well run, serving hundreds of families once a week on Thursdays. The second one we awarded to New Life, because they have 2 pantries in Little Village one on the east side and one on the west side, serving families 4 days a week. They have 7 pantries city wide. Towards the middle of the pandemic, they joined with the Greater Chicago Food Depository and got a lot more food for donations.
- How many non-Rotarians benefitted from this project? More than 500 people for each donation.
- What are the expected long-term community impacts of the project? The long term community impact is more positive awareness of the Rotary Club of Chicago Little Village. The short term community impact is that families were able to be fed and not be hungry because of loss of income and ability to provide for their family.
- If a cooperating organization was involved, what was its role? We worked with Amor de Dios, a pantry of the United Methodist Church and New Life which supplies its 2 pantries in Little Village (7 all around Chicago.)
- How did you share the news of your project? We shared news of our projects through Facebook, emails and photos.

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Financial Summary – Be sure that Income equals Expenditures!

	District Funds Rec'd	Club Contribution	Other Funds	Total
Project 1 with Amor de Dios	\$250 (our DDF)	\$250	Dan \$500	\$1,000.00
Project 2 with New Life	\$500 (From RI grant)	\$500	---	\$1,000.00
Project 3 with New Life	\$300 (refund of dues for conf)	\$700		\$1,000.00
Total Project Income				\$3,000.00

Actual Expenditures Valid Proof of Payment must be saved in pdf on <http://www.matchinggrants.org/district/>

Date	Expense Type	Vendor	Amount	
4/2020.	Donation for food	Amor de Dios, United Methodist Church	\$1,000	
6/2020, 8/2020	Donation for Food	New Life Pantry West	\$1,000	They lost the first check & we replaced it in August
9/2020	Donation for Food	New Life Pantry West	\$1,000	
Total Project Expenditures			\$3,000	

By completing this report, I confirm that to the best of my knowledge my Club has abided by the District Grants Program Details as set forth by Rotary International District 6450 and is in compliance with The Rotary Foundation Grants Terms and Conditions. Any deviation may result in a requirement to return District Funds. I also understand that all photographs submitted in connection with this report will become the property of RI and will not be returned. I warrant that I own all rights in the photographs, including copyright, and hereby grant RI and TRF a royalty free irrevocable license to use the photographs now or at any time in the future, throughout the world in any manner it so chooses and in any medium now known or later developed. This includes the right to modify the photograph(s) as necessary in RI's sole discretion. This also includes, without limitation, use on or in the web sites, magazines, brochures, pamphlets, exhibitions and any other promotional materials of RI and TRF.

Club President

Name Len Dominguez
 Date June 12, 2021
 Email Educate808@gmail.com
 Phone (773) 580-8053

2nd Club Contact

Name Pam Brockman
 Date June 12, 2021
 Email pam.brockman@iahv.org
 Phone (847) 903-9674



SOUTH SIDE WEEKLY

Menu



Martha Bayne

Setting the Table

Food pantries scramble to adapt to the COVID-19 crisis and brace for increased need

PUBLISHED ON MARCH 24, 2020

BY MARTHA BAYNE

On January 22, the Casa Catalina Basic Human Needs Center, a food pantry serving Back of the Yards and surrounding neighborhoods, celebrated its reopening after being closed for more than three

months. Catholic Charities chaplain Father Gerard Kelly blessed the Ashland Avenue storefront space, rehabbed and reorganized to provide supplemental food along what's known as a "client choice" model. Rather than receiving bags of preselected food, visitors could now fill shopping carts with groceries from the shelves of the pantry under the guidance of a volunteer "personal shopper." The changeover had been a little rough—among other things, the rehab of the center had taken much longer than anticipated—but at the time Sister Joellen Tumas, who runs Casa Catalina, was sanguine. "I think it's to give people more of a choice and help them feel like they have control over their lives," she said in January. "We'll see how it goes."

Barely two months later, in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, these careful plans, like so many others, were out the window. Clients entered one by one, some in masks, to take prepacked bags of groceries from a team of gloved volunteers. Casa Catalina usually serves as many as 200 households a week. "We opened at 12:45 and by one had seen thirty-three households," said Tumas on March 18. "It's in and out." On the floor nearby, a man carefully packed every inch of a rolling suitcase with food.

Across Chicago, food pantries are scrambling to figure out how to simultaneously serve their clients, plan for increased need, and keep their staff and volunteers safe. At the food pantry at Amor de Dios United Methodist Church on 24th and Sawyer in Little Village, groceries are still being distributed every Thursday, and on other days as available. But, said pastor Ramiro Rodriguez, "We are protecting ourselves. We don't let the community touch the food, and we only let a few people in at a time, and keep them far apart." At the



2356 S. Sawyer, Chicago, IL 60623

(773) 972-3143

Receipt of Charitable Donation

Amor De Dios Church thankfully acknowledges your tax-deductible contribution and prays that you are able to donate in the future. The following donated item(s) will help our church advance its ministries in the Little Village community of faith:

Donor	Rotary Club of Chicago Little Village
Address	3624 W. 26 th Street
Date	4/30/2020
Donation Type	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cash or Check <input type="checkbox"/> Goods
Description	Donation of \$1,000 for The Food Pantry
Value	\$ 1,000

Amor De Dios United Methodist Church is a recognized 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.
Federal ID number: E99896141.

No goods or services were provided in exchange for this gift other than intangible religious benefits.

Donation received by:

Signature of Pastor or Treasury, Amor de Dios UMC

Front

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Pay to Amer de Dios Food Pantry \$1,000.00
the order of One thousand ⁰⁰/₁₀₀ Dollars

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MARY SCHMICH TRIBUNE VOICES

Column: 'Boxes of hope': In Little Village, a food pantry turns the COVID-19 crisis into opportunity

By MARY SCHMICH
CHICAGO TRIBUNE | JUL 03, 2020



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It's 8:55 a.m. A muggy summer day in Chicago.

Outside the former fruteria on South Lawndale Avenue, two dozen people have already lined up on the sidewalk, leaning on empty baby strollers and metal grocery carts, sweating, fiddling with their masks. Along the curb, cars with flashing blinkers stretch from the corner at 27th Street, past old brick cottages and iron fences, on beyond the red stop sign at 28th.

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“Let’s pray!” Matt DeMateo calls.

Inside the fruteria the workers stand in a loose circle and bow their heads. The pastor from the church across the street leads the prayer in Spanish

Gracias, he says, for the workers’ patience and good health, and *gracias* for the *privilegio* of living in *La Villita*. And *gracias* for this opportunity *trabajar y dar a los otros*: this opportunity to work and give to others.

“Amen,” the workers say.

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Then it’s 9 a.m., right on time, and DeMateo claps his hands once, sharp and loud, and says “Awright, let’s do it,” and the workers are out the door for another day of dispensing what he calls “boxes of hope,” less poetically known as food.

‘We started to dream crazy’

Back in the ordinary midwinter of 2020, New Life Centers of Chicagoland, a nonprofit affiliated with New Life Community Church in Chicago’s Little Village neighborhood, gave out food once a week from the church basement. With a volunteer staff, it fed 100 families, mostly with donations from Trader Joe’s.

Then in mid-March came the pandemic.

Few places were harder hit than Little Village, sometimes known as the capital of the Mexican Midwest. Many people got sick. Some died. In the consequent economic crash, thousands were laid off. Most of those who kept their jobs were

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So in April, after the renowned Chicago chef Rick Bayless donated 50 boxes of food and Trader Joe's increased its donations, New Life expanded its vision.



Alex Ramon, 18, right, helps pull a pallet with boxes of food at New Life Centers in Chicago's Little Village on July 2, 2020. (Jose M. Osorio / Chicago Tribune)

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Kate Rivera, 19, helps to load food boxes into cars for families in need at New Life Centers. (Jose M. Osorio / Chicago Tribune)

“We started to dream crazy,” says DeMateo, the organization’s executive director, a 37-year-old who favors jeans and a backward-facing Cubs cap. “Man, what if we fed a thousand families?”

By early May, New Life was in a partnership with the Greater Chicago Food Depository, and soon it was feeding 1,000 families a week. Then 2,000. Then 3,000. Truck after truck of food arrived at the fruteria’s back door, and by June, the New Life crew was feeding 6,000 families — 30,000 or so people — at seven sites around the city. DeMateo calls them “lighthouses in the storm.”

“Out of crisis,” he says, “comes opportunity.”

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It's 9:02 a.m.

"I'm going to follow Abelardo," I say and from behind his "Stronger Together" face mask, DeMateo laughs. "You'll have to move fast."

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Abelardo Colin was 16 when he migrated to Chicago from Mexico. He spoke no English. A longtime New Life pantry volunteer, he's 37 now, and in mid-May, just as he finished his associate degree in social work at Malcolm X College, he took a paid job running the Little Village pantry operation.

On this hot morning, he sprints across the sidewalks, making sure everything's OK, his walkie-talkie squawking constantly: "Abelardo! Abelardo!" He waves cars into the loading line, calling "Adelante! Buenos dias!" He reminds others to wear their masks.

He also oversees the workers with clipboards who ask each car a few questions: Address? How many in the home? Are you on food stamps? No names required. Anyone who shows up is welcome.

Today that even includes a city bus driver, who has just maneuvered through the long line of waiting cars to reach the corner stop. Colin slides a box of food through

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But even as he says it Colin is off, hustling back to the Fruteria to roll out a giant pallet of frozen meat.

'Bringing light'

It was well-timed luck that just as the pandemic hit, the owners of Gela's Fruteria, across from New Life, decided to retire. They hadn't sold the building yet, so they handed over the keys, along with access to their coolers, which has helped make the operation possible.

And for an operation that didn't exist at this scale three months ago, the pantry is remarkably efficient. Cars pull up nonstop in front of a tented area where a line of young people load boxes into the popped trunks.

"Speed it up!" someone calls, and the workers gladly do. For many of them, like Alex Ramon, tossing, catching and quickly loading the heavy boxes is a form of competitive sport.

Ramon, 18, lives with his mother, who's retired from a candy factory, and an older brother, who was laid off from a mall job when the pandemic hit. His father died when he was a child, and for a decade DeMateo, who lives across the street, has been his mentor.

A few years ago, Ramon was shot, yet another child victim of gang crossfire not meant for him, but he carried on. He recently graduated from high school and now is one of the 10 pantry workers who, thanks to the government's Paycheck Protection Program, is being paid. The money keeps his family afloat, but he's at the pantry for more than a paycheck.

"It's bringing light to Little Village," he says.

Talk to the pantry workers and they all use words such as light, joy, opportunity,

The New Life congregation has buried a dozen people because of it, among them Emilia Martínez.

“Emmy loved on everyone,” says Erika Lobatos, who helps manage the Little Village site. “She gave the best hugs.”

Martinez was a community leader, one of the older women who taught Lobatos, who’s 39, the meaning of “radical hospitality.” Those older women are one reason that on this muggy day, Lobatos stands outside the fruteria, talking to the constant parade of people who come on foot, listening to their stories and their needs, helping them heave boxes into their empty strollers and carts.

Then it’s 10 a.m., then 11, then noon. The lines stay long. A guy named Big Mike shows up to help load a truck for deliveries to people too sick to come themselves. The pantry has also delivered in some Black neighborhoods where the grocery stores closed after recent looting.

Who knows how long this form of radical hospitality will go on in Little Village, but the need will last a while. A new mural across the street from the fruteria will be a reminder of why. It’s dedicated to community members lost during the time of the pandemic, some to violence, others to the disease.

The names were scheduled to go up Thursday evening. Among the COVID-19-related deaths would be these:

Emilia Lozano Martínez

Maria G. Ayala

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María del Carmen Cárdenas

Guillermo Chávez

There will be space for more, just as there will continue to be the need for boxes of hope.

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08/22 2020

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