West Chicago’s Community Market distributes a wide variety of foods and produce.
“One Book, One World”
12:00pm – 1:30pm
PRC Wheaton | 201 S. Naperville Road
This month’s book hits close to home: *An American Summer: Love and Death in Chicago* by Alex Kotlowitz. All are invited to bring lunch to the Megan Bradshaw Learning Center and be part of the group whether you’ve read the book or not.

Dine Away Hunger
11am – 9:30pm
Ivy Restaurant | 120 Hale Street | Wheaton
February’s Dine Away Hunger event is hosted at Ivy Restaurant. Ivy is generously donating 10% of sales on February 19 to the PRC Food Pantry to purchase fresh and nutritious food. Visit and enjoy the ambience while savoring an award-winning meal. Online reservations are encouraged (ivyofwheaton.com) or call 630-665-2489. Please thank them for their support when you mention Dine Away Hunger.

Frida, Frida, Frida
5:30pm – 7:00pm
PRC Wheaton | 201 S. Naperville Road
Join us for a lecture about the life and work of legendary Mexican artist, Frida Kahlo, followed by a hands-on decorated self-portrait. Please bring a photo of yourself to copy for the workshop if participating. Lecture from 5:30pm - 6:00pm and workshop from 6:00pm - 7:00pm.

“One Book, One World”
12:00pm – 1:30pm
PRC Wheaton | 201 S. Naperville Road
*The Summer Wives*, a novel by Beatriz Williams, is the March selection of the PRC Book Group. Anyone can drop in to the Megan Bradshaw Learning Center and become part of the conversation whether they’ve read the book or not. Bring your lunch and meet new friends!

Dine Away Hunger
Times vary
Culver’s | 290 Schmale | Carol Stream
Culver’s | 2500 Ogden Avenue | Downers Grove
El Famous Burrito | 256 Roosevelt Road | Lombard
El Famous Burrito | 1165 Bloomingdale Road | Glendale Heights
Got a hankerin’ for some delicious fast food? On March 18, each of the restaurants listed above will donate 10% of sales to People’s Resource Center’s Food Pantry because it’s Dine Away Hunger Day!! Feel good because part of your purchase will help feed hungry families in DuPage County. Tell them you’re there for Dine Away Hunger and have a wonderful meal!

All events listed are open to the public. If you are hosting an event for the public in PRC’s honor, let us know. Email us at rsvp@peoplesrc.org.
Winter - Refresh & Rejuvenate

“Winter is the time when trees grow the most, except, we do not see it. It happens underground, beneath the surface, in the roots.” A colleague recently shared this insight at a staff meeting, and the image resonated with me.

I share it with you now as a reminder that as a caring community, we can use this season to focus on growth, too. At PRC, we are always learning how to meet the needs of our neighbors. Whether it is with food, job assistance, tutoring or just an ear to listen, we meet neighbors who are in the midst of change and growth. And so often, there is more need, and more potential, below the surface where we don’t immediately see it.

Because of the compassion of the PRC community, this winter we will focus on helping each neighbor who walks through our doors. PRC can be part of the growth, healing, and connectedness that create a community. Thank you for all you do to make this possible!

I invite you, as well, to consider the many ways you can grow and renew this season. Take some time to find ways to refresh and rejuvenate. Celebrate your connections and the impact a caring community can make. Consider getting more involved at PRC, or ask our team members for suggestions! The growth that can happen to you beneath the surface, in your “roots” will make a lasting and meaningful difference to neighbors. PRC is honored to be a part of your lives and the communities of DuPage.

Jeni Fabian
Executive Director

Volunteer Spotlight: Bill O’Connor

After 20 years on the “job,” we said goodbye to Wheaton Food Pantry Volunteer Bill O’Connor. Bill started working in the food pantry three times per week before scaling down to two weekly shifts. He retired because it was time “for a change” he said. “Nothing more than that.”

“Twenty years ago I was driving home from golf and saw a sign on Roosevelt Road asking for PRC volunteers,” he recalled, “and I went in and signed up and six-months later, after they hadn’t called me, I went back. They told me it’s up to the volunteers to choose when they will start. I could have started in June, but I ended up starting later in January.”

To celebrate his retirement, Bill, his family, and his PRC family gathered in the food pantry after his final shift for an impromptu going-away party. Food Pantry Supervisor Barry Kerstein remembered his first introduction to Bill. “When I started here, Bill was the grocery cart guy. He made my transition from Westmont to Wheaton much easier. He’s been a blast to be around and a great person.”

PRC employees and volunteers on his shift agree. When the festivities were over and Bill prepared to leave, we left him with important advice: You can always come back.
Did you know People’s Resource Center operates three food pantries in DuPage County?

Most readers know that PRC has food pantries at our offices in Wheaton and Westmont five days a week. However, it might surprise you to hear that PRC operates a food pantry in West Chicago called the WeGo Community Market. The “WeGo” name comes from a combination of the words West Chicago.

PRC works in collaboration with WeGo Together for Kids to serve families from School District 33, which is located within the boundaries of the City of West Chicago. The district serves children and families Pre-K through 8th grade.

“On July 1, 2019, we started our third year partnering with the WeGo Community Market,” said PRC’s Senior Director of Programs, Christina LePage. “WeGo Together for Kids established the Market in 2014 to create a permanent location where families could access healthy foods. Operation of the Market was transitioned to PRC in 2017. It is our collective goal to work with WeGo Together for Kids to develop the Market as a hub of community resources.”

The Market is open once a week at Leman Middle School. It is available to all resident families regardless if they have children currently in District 33.

“The Market is welcoming,” said Christina. “The PRC Coordinator, Erika Olsen, has built strong relationships with the Market community, including guests and volunteers.”

PRC attends monthly WeGo Together for Kids Partner meetings to connect with the local stakeholders that share a mission to strengthen families in West Chicago. As a result, we’ve been able to connect Community Market guests with local resources.

“For example, we had a visit from the West Chicago Library last November to promote family literacy and to help families secure library cards. The University of Illinois Extension comes on a regular basis to share information with families about healthy foods and recipes,” she continued. “The Market provides a way to share information about other local services, including the range of PRC’s programs.

“Through this experience, PRC has learned how a school-based food pantry can work. We are grateful Leman Middle School has dedicated space for the Market and storage. We hope to apply what we have learned about this service model to serve other communities in the future. “There is a strong spirit of collaboration in West Chicago. We are fortunate to work with so many likeminded partners to develop strength and support for West Chicago families.”

Leman Middle School is located at 238 E. Hazel Street in West Chicago.

Other West Chicago Happenings

In addition to the Market, PRC is very involved in West Chicago through Summer Science and Kids Art Classes.

Summer Science uses hands-on learning to reinforce education from the previous school year and prepare students for their upcoming classes. Last year, 503 DuPage students participated in this free program. PRC worked in conjunction with WeGo to set up classes.

“We received 170 West Chicago applications for 90 spaces in the program,” said Rebecca Eller, PRC’s Director of Adult Learning and Literacy. “Last year was our first year in West Chicago. The reception was positive, and kids were engaged. We look forward to more opportunities for partnerships.”

PRC also partners to deliver three after-school art classes at different sites in West Chicago. The organization Puente del Pueblo runs the after-school programs and works with PRC to schedule and oversee art classes. PRC provides the supplies and volunteer teachers for the weekly sessions.

PRC Art Director Lesley Gena explained, “We give kids a safe space after school providing them with extra encouragement and experiences they couldn’t get elsewhere.”
Be Counted: The 2020 Census

In 2020, expect an extra day (February 29), a presidential election, summer Olympics and being counted in the census.

Why is it so important to be counted? Census data is used to determine each state’s representation in Congress and to distribute billions of federal funds to local communities for infrastructure, healthcare, schools and other programs.

An advisory group, the DuPage County Complete Count Committee, is partnering with PRC and other key stakeholders, with hopes of counting everyone living in DuPage County. PRC’s Senior Director of Programs, Christina LePage, explained how PRC got involved.

PRC has already hosted job workshops to find future Census Takers. This step ensures there is a full-staff of Census Bureau employees to accurately count the DuPage population.

In addition, PRC can be a resource for residents about the upcoming Census and what to expect.

Christina adds, “We are grateful for DuPage County’s leadership and strong local partnerships in this very important process.”

Visit 2020census.gov/jobs for census employment information. For additional information on the DuPage census, go to: https://census-events-portal-dupage.hub.arcgis.com/

Meet PRC’s Junior Board

People’s Resource Center is thrilled to announce the formation of a Junior Board, comprised of students from Westmont High School. The pilot program was inspired by PRC’s Strategic Plan as a way to engage a new generation of volunteers.

“We’re looking to add more energy, new ideas, and the perspective of young adults as PRC continues to grow and expand our impact,” said PRC Executive Director Jeni Fabian. “Westmont High School is a neighbor to our Westmont location, and has been an amazing supportive partner for many years.”

The inaugural Junior Board has 23 members. Co-President Violet Okon explained her interest in the group. “Last year, PRC reached out to Principal and PRC Board member Jack Baldermann and asked if students would be interested in serving on PRC’s first-ever Junior Board. We formed a work group of PRC employees to advise how we prepare for and involve the Junior Board, and to work together with the students.”

The Junior Board’s first group appearance was at Share the Spirit in December 2019, where they assisted families and wrapped holiday gifts. “We’re very excited that the students helped us at Share the Spirit,” said Kris Martinez, PRC team member and member of the Junior Board coordinating group. “They are also planning supply drives, and will help us organize the Race to the Flag 5K in May.”

Hearing opinions from Junior Board members is one of PRC’s first priorities. “I’m so excited about the enthusiasm and the wisdom that the students are already bringing to PRC,” Jeni stated.

Co-president Stefana Hernandez is enthused about being a member. “I feel that all the people on the Junior Board have the community’s best interest in mind and we’re super excited to be able to give back since it has given us so much. I grew up going to People’s Resource Center for arts and crafts classes and it makes me want to be able to make a positive difference like the one that was given to me.”

PRC is also looking forward to the Junior Board’s assistance as it faces the challenge of a new decade.

Jeni explained, “The Junior Boards’ willingness to ask great questions and try new things has been wonderful out of the gate.”

Welcome to the PRC community!

Planned Giving — Make PRC a part of your legacy!

One of the most transformational ways to support People’s Resource Center is by making a planned gift. By creating a lasting legacy with a charitable bequest to PRC today, you will ensure the legacy that was started by our founders for generations of our DuPage county neighbors to come. Planned gifts preserve what means most to you, while offering financial flexibility and giving you the option to change your mind at any time.

If you have included People’s Resource Center in your estate plans, please let us know. We would like to thank you for your generosity, make sure the purpose of your gift is understood by PRC and recognize you as a member of our Dorothy McIntyre Legacy Society. Or if you wish, your gift intentions can remain anonymous.

To discuss a planned gift in more detail, please contact Michelle Clegg, Director of Development at 630-682-5402, ext. 242 or mclegg@peoplesrc.org.

Welcome to the PRC community!
BMO Harris Volunteers
Led by PRC board member Erin Norton, staffers from BMO Harris donated their time to volunteer in our Wheaton Food Pantry. As their smiles indicate, working in the Food Pantry is fun!

Annual Holly & Hope Luncheon
In early December, over 120 individuals kicked off the holiday season at PRC’s annual Holly & Hope Luncheon. Held at LeJardin in Cantigny Park, the event featured unique raffle and silent auction prizes, including theatre tickets, a Dooney & Bourke purse and gift certificates to many restaurants in the area. Save the Date for December 2, 2020 and we’ll see you next year!

Veggie Tales
In 2009, a group of women calling themselves Vacant to Vegetables (V2V) contacted us about planting a community garden to benefit our Food Pantry clients. They soon created a monthly cooking demo class to teach clients how to prepare nutritious, economical meals with food available in our pantry. It was a huge hit. After ten years, PRC’s final demo from the cooks at V2V took place in November. Our decade-long relationship with them will be missed, but we are elated knowing their work changed many lives. Thank you for an engaging ten years, V2V!

A Timely Donation
Thank You to the Mary Elizabeth Circle of First United Methodist Church in Downers Grove for 34 Birthday Bags, 32 Toys, & 9 Books! We can use them year-round!
Join us in welcoming PRC’s new Director of Development to the PRC family!

“I am thrilled to be the Director of Development at People’s Resource Center,” said Michelle.

“My colleagues are exceptional, as are volunteers and clients I have had the pleasure to meet.”

Michelle’s introduction to PRC began in the middle of PRC’s busy holiday season. “Starting at PRC right before Thanksgiving truly gave me a first-hand opportunity to experience what makes PRC so wonderful.

“From the food drives, the volunteer shifts and classes, to the special events like the Holiday Luncheon, Gavin Coyle, and Share the Spirit – I basically had a “crash course” in all things PRC, and it was amazing! I look forward to getting to know even more about PRC and the people who make it what it is.”

Michelle has spent 20 years in the advancement field for several non-profits in the Chicagoland area, and her background also includes a law degree.

“I look forward to building on the foundation of success and generosity that is embedded in the fabric of the PRC community,” she remarked. “The Development Office will continue to advance the distinctive mission of PRC with the help of a loyal cadre of volunteers, staff, sponsors, donors and friends.”

Michelle grew up in Park Ridge and currently resides in Naperville. She and her husband have two teenaged daughters and two rescue dogs.
Share the Spirit Highlights

Thanks to our wonderful donors and volunteers, this year’s Share the Spirit brightened the holidays of 1,858 children! Because of your support 688 families were able to choose the perfect toys, books, hats and gloves for their little ones. Your help made it a success! Thank you!