



Safety Net Story Feeding the South Suburbs During a Pandemic

A trip to Blue Cap Pantry is a lifeline for Florida Mosely, a senior resident of Blue Island. Each month, she receives just \$16 in food stamp benefits to purchase groceries. **She also lives in an area that lacks stores with fresh, healthy grocery options—known as a “food desert”.**

“It’s a blessing to me,” Ms. Florida said about her monthly trips to Blue Cap Pantry.

Years ago, partners of the Blue Island-Robbins Neighborhood Network agreed that issues facing children, seniors and families in the area, like poor health and high poverty, were rooted in a lack of access to healthy foods.

Creating a pantry would be a critical first step to resolving those problems.

Now, in the midst of the coronavirus crisis, Blue Cap Pantry is even more vital. Workers’ hours are being cut and they’re losing their jobs, compounding households’ existing financial struggles. The crisis is also deepening long-standing racial and economic inequities, particularly when it comes to accessing nutritious food and quality health care.

The food Blue Cap is providing through this pandemic is helping our neighbors meet their most basic needs. In this time of isolation, they’re also creating a sense of connection to the community.

Howard Brown, a frequent shopper at the pantry, said he doesn’t just go to the pantry for food, he goes “to receive hope.”

“Blue Cap is more than just a food pantry,” he said. ■

“People will go there to get fresh fruits and vegetables... but they also go there because they’re treated with respect. They’re treated with care.”

—Howard Brown, Pantry Customer

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