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How the Basket Brigade brings Thanksgiving to the needy



Volunteers pack and load baskets of food at last year's Basket Brigade event in Streamwood. This year's event aims to deliver 650 Thanksgiving dinners.

Courtesy of the Basket Brigade

Submitted by the Basket Brigade

The Basket Brigade of Suburban Chicago was founded by Streamwood residents Brian and Cherish Walsh with the mission "to put the GIVING back into Thanksgiving."

Its mission is to provide a basket containing a complete Thanksgiving dinner to struggling families within Streamwood, Hanover Park, Bartlett, Hoffman Estates, Schaumburg, Palatine, Elk Grove, Elgin and South Elgin.

Founded in memory of Brian's mother, Lorraine M. Walsh, the Basket Brigade of Suburban Chicago combines aspects of fundraising and volunteerism, along with personal and spiritual growth.

The Basket Brigade concept was inspired by Anthony Robbins more than 30 years ago as an individual effort to feed families in need. These Basket Brigades now feed more than 2 million people annually in countries all over the world between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The dignity of the recipient is very important. Each package contains a note stating, "This comes to you from someone who cares about you. All we ask is that you take care of yourself well enough to be able to do this for someone else someday."

On Saturday, Nov. 18, baskets will be packed at Streamwood Park District's Community Center, which is donating the space. The center is at 777 S. Bartlett Road.

The Basket Brigade of Suburban Chicago is not funded by federal dollars or large corporations -- donations come from supporters in local communities and go directly to program efforts.

To date, the Basket Brigade has helped 463 families enjoy a full Thanksgiving meal. Each basket feeds a family of five, so they were able to bring Thanksgiving to 2,315 people who may not have been able to afford to celebrate otherwise.

More than 260 volunteers helped create the baskets and hand deliver them to families in 2015 and 2016.

How you can help

In order to reach its goal of feeding 650 families this year, the Basket Brigade of Suburban Chicago is seeking volunteers and donations. It accepts donations online (<http://www.basketbrigade.net/sponsor/>) via PayPal. Monetary donations are the most efficient way to help, and the most needed.

A donation of \$50 can feed one whole family, with all donations going toward purchasing food and supplies.

- Nominations for families in need are being accepted now at basketbrigade.net/nominate-a-family/ (<http://basketbrigade.net/nominate-a-family/>).
- If you are free Saturday, Nov. 18, to donate your time of a few hours, half a day, or a full day, register at www.basketbrigade.net/volunteer/.
- Details: www.basketbrigade.net (<http://www.basketbrigade.net>); Facebook: www.facebook.com/basketbrigadesuburbanchicago/ (<http://www.facebook.com/basketbrigadesuburbanchicago/>); Video: youtu.be/AzTUOLuEgYQ (<https://youtu.be/AzTUOLuEgYQ>); Contact: Brian Walsh, founder, (847) 275-9055 or Cherish Walsh, co-founder, (847) 287-9055.

The Basket Brigade of Suburban Chicago is a division of The Lorraine M. Walsh Memorial Foundation, a 501(c) (3) charity. All donations are tax deductible.

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