

10,000 Reasons to be Thankful this Thanksgiving

The secret to LIVING is GIVING. A simple principle that is the guiding force behind the Basket Brigade of Suburban Chicago. In its fifth year, the Basket Brigade is delivering 2,000 complete Thanksgiving dinners to local area families-in-need. Each Thanksgiving basket feeds a family of five, which will feed 10,000 people! Each basket includes a turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, gravy, rolls, corn, marshmallows, cranberries, vegetables, mac and cheese, and even a pumpkin pie for dessert.

The Basket Brigade of Suburban Chicago was founded by Brian and Cherish Walsh with the mission “to put the GIVING back into Thanksgiving.” Each year, on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, the Basket Brigade of Suburban Chicago puts together a team of hundreds of volunteers who come together to assemble and then personally deliver these dinners to local families-in-need who were nominated by a variety of sources including private nominations on the Basket Brigade’s website as well as names provided by other local nonprofits, churches, daycares, schools and other social service organizations.

“Each basket contains enough food to feed a family of five,” says Basket Brigade Treasurer, Eric Hartmann, “and the thought that we are literally bringing Thanksgiving to 10,000 people this year is absolutely amazing.”

“Another really cool part of the process,” says Brian Walsh, “that we focus on is the *growth of the giver*, as they are personally delivering the meal to the family-in-need. The impact of seeing how their volunteering is directly impacting the lives of these families-in-need is immeasurable.”

All nominations are absolutely confidential, and each basket contains a note stating that “*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.*” Which is written in both English and Spanish. Also included in the box are handmade coloring pages and notes from the children of the volunteers.

“We really try to make the overall experience of the Thanksgiving basket to be both functional and inspirational,” says co-founder Cherish Walsh, “and we definitely want our kids to play a big role in that, so we came up with crafts and coloring pages that are included in the box, which serve two purposes: it allows our children to feel more involved in the process, and keeps the younger kids occupied while the parents are assembling the boxes. We also welcome scouts and youth groups to help out on assembly day, so that we are instilling the *heart of the giver* in the next generation.”

The Basket Brigade board spends most of the year planning, fundraising, organizing and finding the recipients. “We work closely with our communities to find the volunteers and to solicit the necessary donations, both private and corporate,” said Brian Walsh, “we have also been able to partner up with many cool organizations, nonprofits, and civic organizations to identify families-in-need. It is really a team effort.”

“The whole process is an emotional and uplifting one,” says Cherish Walsh, “and the stories and the notes of thanks that we receive from the recipients, and the reports we receive back from the drivers

of the joy they witness, the people literally jumping for joy, praising God, and thanking them over and over again, are truly inspirational.”

“The message that we strive to pass along to our volunteers, our children, and the community,” concludes Brian Walsh, “is that **the secret to LIVING is GIVING.**”

The Basket Brigade of Suburban Chicago is based entirely on the kindness and generosity of our donors and corporate sponsors. Special thanks to this year’s Premier Sponsors including Sevan Multi-Site Solutions, General Iron Industries, Allegra Palatine, and State Farm.

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The Basket Brigade of Suburban Chicago is a 501 (c)(3), a dba of The Lorraine M. Walsh Memorial Foundation.

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Website: www.basketbrigade.net
Facebook: www.facebook.com/basketbrigadesuburbanchicago/
Video: <https://youtu.be/AzTUOLuEgYQ>
Phones: Brian Walsh, founder (847) 275-9055
Cherish Walsh, co-founder (847) 287-9055

*** ** YOU CAN DOWNLOAD A VARIETY OF HIGH-RESOLUTION IMAGES FROM PAST BASKET BRIGADE EVENTS AT: <http://www.basketbrigade.net/photos-hi-resolution/>

