



newsletter

fall 2015

The mission of the Comer Food Pantry is to relieve hunger for families of children receiving care at Comer Children's Hospital.

Welcome!

This is the fifth edition of our quarterly newsletter for those interested in supporting the Comer Food Pantry.

About Comer Food Pantry

The Comer Food Pantry was founded in 2010 by a group of Pritzker medical students, Comer Children's Hospital staff, and University of Chicago faculty. We partner with the Greater Chicago Food Depository to supply food to families of patients in Comer Children's Hospital.

The Comer Food Pantry operates in the 2nd (NICU), 4th (PICU), 5th and 6th floor family lounges in Comer Children's Hospital. Food is free and available to all families of Comer patients, any time during the day or night. There are no requirements to receive food, nor limits on how much families may take, making the Food Pantry welcoming and accessible to anyone in need.

Why is there a food pantry inside of a hospital?

Although the hospital attracts patients from throughout the Midwest, its primary patient population is from the South Side of Chicago. Our communities experience some of the highest rates of food insecurity in the city—in some neighborhoods, more than half of residents don't know where their next meal will come from.

Food insecurity has been linked to negative health outcomes in both children and adults. We started the Comer Food Pantry in response to anecdotal evidence from hospital staff suggesting that parents were going hungry at their children's bedsides. The Food Pantry aims to address the issue of food insecurity experienced by family members during a child's hospitalization.

Comer Children's Hospital RBC Race for the Kids



On October 4th, University of Chicago Medicine held the 2015 Comer Children's Hospital RBC Run for the Kids. Over 1,800 people participated in the event, which raised more than \$300,000 through sponsors, participants, donors, and volunteers. Comer Food Pantry team members joined in the race, and collectively raised over \$500.

Participants ran and walked the 5K route that started and ended on the University of Chicago campus, taking them through Hyde Park and past the Museum of Science and Industry.

The youngest participants were invited to run in the Kids' Dash, a two-hundred yard race for those six years and younger. Older children participated in the Kids' Mile, a one-mile course that took them on a loop from the University campus to 57th St.

The money raised from this run will enable University of Chicago Medicine to support and bolster the cutting-edge scientific research at Comer Children's Hospital, and to provide the best possible care for patients.

Donor Spotlight:

Julia Auerbach, Comer Food Pantry Advocate

Julia is the food pantry's youngest supporter, and is collecting donations to help feed hungry families. Thank you, Julia!



How did you first learn about the food pantry?

Last winter, my brother Leo was hospitalized at Comer Children's Hospital. My mom mentioned to me how much a visitor's food tray cost in the hospital. She went on to tell me about the Comer Food Pantry, specifically the one on the floor where Leo was staying, which helps feed some patient families facing, not only the issue of their loved one's illness, but also the issue of food insecurity. After I heard about this problem and the food pantry solution, I was hooked. To this day, I haven't been able to stop talking about how I wanted to help.

What influenced you to collect donations for the food pantry?

Ever since my mom mentioned the Comer Food Pantry, I knew that I had to help this outstanding organization. I knew that I wanted to support the Food Pantry as part of my bat mitzvah project, but it was not until this summer when I was hospitalized at Comer that I saw the need for myself. When I took a look at one of the food pantries on the floor where I was staying, I saw the power of comforting families of patients with the simple act of offering food and beverages.

During my visit to the food pantry, I met a nice gentleman who was there with his daughter. He was making himself a cup of coffee and some macaroni and cheese for the two of them. I thought that it was a great idea to offer food that could be cooked quickly in the hospital family lounges, and that families could take home if they were having issues affording this necessity. From the minute I heard about the Comer Food Pantry, to the time I saw it in person, I knew that I couldn't just watch - I had to help by getting involved.

What impact do you hope the donations will have?

I really hope that the snack foods, on-the-go foods, and other comfort foods that I will be donating will not only feed patients' families in need of food, but will also be a fun alternative to the other options available.

Donate to the Comer Food Pantry! We couldn't do this without you.

If you'd like to make a donation, please contact Isabella Joslin at **(773) 834-5890** or **ijoslin@bsd.uchicago.edu**

The Comer Food Pantry is led by researchers from the South Side Health & Vitality Studies at the Lindau Lab. This work is supported by the University of Chicago Medicine Urban Health Initiative and generous donations from individuals.



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