

PROCLAMATION

NATIONAL HUNGER ACTION MONTH – SEPTEMBER 2025

WHEREAS, millions of Americans face hunger every day and hunger can affect people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, many Americans are one job loss or medical crisis away from food insecurity; and

WHEREAS, one in five Chicago households is experiencing food insecurity and hunger; and

WHEREAS, in Oak Park, it is estimated that more than 7,000 people are ‘food insecure’ – meaning they do not know from where their next meal will come; and

WHEREAS, September is **National Hunger Action Month** – an opportunity for people across the country to stand together to end food insecurity and hunger. During this month, and year-round, we can all take action by advocating, donating, and volunteering; and

WHEREAS, the Greater Chicago Food Depository has a network of more than 800 food pantries and programs to help families across the Chicago area; and

WHEREAS, Beyond Hunger, located here in Oak Park, provides more than 65,000 individuals each year with hunger relief across 13 zip codes including Oak Park, River Forest, and portions of Chicago and its near-west suburbs. Visit GoBeyondHunger.org to see their action plan and learn how we can work together to end hunger; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, Anthony Clark, founder of Suburban Unity Alliance (S.U.A.), pioneered efforts to reduce food insecurity in Oak Park and surrounding communities by installing the first Oak Park Community Refrigerator (referred to as the “Community Fridge”) at Carnival Grocery, 824 South Oak Ave., Oak Park, with Chibuike Enyia and Juanta Griffin on March 13, 2021. Open 24/7, the fridges operate on a “take what you need, leave what you can” principle. By September 12, 2021, a third Community Fridge was installed at Euclid Avenue United Methodist Church, 405 S. Euclid, which continues to operate today. Through Clark’s leadership, these Community Fridges addressed food insecurity and food waste while promoting equitable access to nutritious food. He also spearheaded the Food Aid Festival which began in 2022. The annual music festival supporting organizations that fight food insecurity, including Oak Park Community Fridges, Beyond Hunger, A House in Austin, Austin Eats Initiative, Best of Proviso Township, and Westchester Food Pantry, now under the leadership of Donnie Biggins, owner of Robert’s Westside and Eastside in Forest Park, and WBEZ Chicago.; and

WHEREAS, today, in 2025, in partnership with the Community of Congregations, Karen McMillin and Jennifer Quinlan continue to lead and nurture the Oak Park Community Fridges, a vital initiative located at Boulevard Presbyterian Church, 607 Harvard Street, and Euclid Avenue Methodist Church, 405 S. Euclid Ave. (Fridge located in the shed across the street in the church parking lot). Their work ensures that community members always have access to food in a safe, reliable way, operating under the guiding principle: “take what you need, leave what you can.” Beyond food donations, financial contributions can also be made online to support the ongoing efforts to reduce food insecurity and prevent food waste. The dedication of Karen and Jennifer is essential in sustaining this life-changing resource and building a stronger, healthier community for all.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Vicki Scaman, President of the Village of Oak Park and Board of Trustees, do hereby proclaim September 2025 to be **National Hunger Action Month** in the Village of Oak Park, and encourage all community members to take action to reduce hunger in our community and across the country.

DATED this 9th day of September, 2025.

Vicki Scaman
Village President

ATTEST:

Christina M. Waters
Village Clerk