



2017 Annual Report





Hope is growing in Chicago's suburbs

For going on half a century, Respond Now has been serving Chicago's south suburbs in the areas of hunger, health, and housing. For our organization 2017 was another watershed year. While the ongoing reduction of many government programs put new strain on our communities, Respond Now has been successful in growing the scope of our services thanks to the generous support of our dedicated donors, partners, staff, and volunteers.

OUR MISSION

Respond Now exists to provide immediate relief for residents of Chicago's south suburbs who are in the most need while maintaining their dignity and affording them respect.

We do this by:

- Helping people through their temporary emergencies with financial assistance
- Providing food to families and individuals in need
- Providing sound referrals and counseling for other needed services

OUR VISION

At Respond Now, our vision is to:

- Become a hub of access to social services in Chicago's south suburbs
- Advance and refine our delivery of emergency services

Respond Now continues to develop a first-rate system where individuals are not only matched with available community resources, but will be provided the individualized attention that they need as well as the follow-up to ensure that services were adequately provided.

OUR CLIENTS

The 22 communities Respond Now serves in the south suburbs are stricken with the highest levels of poverty and unemployment in all of suburban Chicago. Recent studies* show that nearly half of families living in these areas deal with food insecurity on a regular basis—representing more than 760,000 residents. Foreclosure rates in our service area are some of the highest* in all of suburban Cook County. Some of our clients have recently been laid off while others live on fixed incomes, finding it difficult to make ends meet. Still others struggle with disability and inadequate services. Most urgently, 30%* of area children are living below the poverty line.

“Respond Now is a connection point in the community. It’s the place that people can come to be heard and to find the information that can make a difference in their lives. Listening—it really matters.”

*- James Woods,
Respond Now volunteer*

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR:

It is with great pride that we present you with the Respond Now 2017 Annual Report. Over the last 10 years, Respond Now has grown to more comprehensively address the health, hunger, and housing needs within our communities. We present this document to report on that growth and give thanks and recognition.

Since 1969, Respond Now has provided emergency services to those in crisis. We believe that with this longevity comes a growing responsibility to respond to the needs of our neighbors. We have offered the services of a food pantry since 1969, but we decided we could do more to ensure that our neighbors are accessing the food that they need; in response to this, the SNAP outreach program was conceived, implemented, and developed. We have provided rent and utility assistance for many years, but so too did we recognize that we could do more to help those with housing needs, resulting in our new Supportive Housing and Housing Counseling services. Furthermore, while for many years Respond Now has provided prescription medication services, we now seek guarantees for everyone in need of better access to health insurance through case services providing linkages to Medicaid expansion.

Respond Now continues to be a community agency that is accessible to clients, volunteers, and donors. Our growth is a reflection of the confidence that you and everyone have placed in us to address those needs with love, dignity, and respect. Our growth is a sign of success for those who have supported us for many years, and our communities have reason to be proud of an agency which they, together, have been an integral part of creating. Congratulations to all of you. We hope that this annual report serves as a reflection of our deep gratitude and pride.

Carl Wolf



2017 AT A GLANCE

48

years serving Chicago's
far south suburbs



22

distinct
communities served



20%

increase in families served
since 2009

132

families provided with rent
and utility assistance

401

families assisted with
accessing SNAP benefits

14,969

families served with food,
health, and housing support



At Respond Now, we provide immediate, short-term assistance so families can meet their day-to-day needs and focus on looking for more long-term solutions. With the assistance of partners, donors, staff, and volunteers, we strive to break the cycle of poverty.

The following is an overview of our core services:

HUNGER SERVICES



- Our food pantry consists of a client choice menu that includes the basic food groups: fruits vegetables, proteins, grains, and dairy. Clients typically receive several bags of groceries.
 - We offer our clients an opportunity to apply for food stamps through our SNAP Outreach program.
 - In 2016, 307 households applied and 122 received benefits with the assistance of our SNAP outreach team, which resulted in a 40% completion rate. In 2017, 401 households applied.
 - In 2017, clients visited Respond Now 8,059 times to receive food from our pantry.
 - 18,000 bags of groceries are distributed per year.
 - There are approximately 14,000 food insecure individuals in the 60411 zip code alone (this includes Chicago Heights and Ford Heights). Respond Now fed approximately 5,000 of those individuals, or about 35%, as of last count in the 2015 calendar year.
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HOUSING SERVICES



- We strive to keep our families happy and healthy in their local homes through mortgage, rental, and utility assistance.
 - Temporary lodging is also available to qualifying families and individuals who may be facing homelessness due to fire, eviction, or other crises.
 - Foreclosure Prevention Specialists advise those families who are having difficulty paying their mortgages.
 - We offer ongoing housing support for the chronically homeless or otherwise in need.
-

HEALTH SERVICES



- Our prescription voucher program helps offset the prohibitively high costs of medicine by supplying clients who have little or no insurance coverage and urgently need prescription medication.
 - We additionally assist clients in accessing insurance coverage through the Affordable Care Act and Medicaid Expansion.
 - An ongoing health and housing alliance with Franciscan Health Chicago Heights further allows us to ensure the health and safety of our clients.
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ADDITIONAL SERVICES



- Clothing donations for all ages, men and women.
 - Transportation support, including assistance with bus fares.
 - Yearly events, such as our “Christmas Store” holiday giveaway.
 - Support with back-to-school materials, such as backpacks.
-

SERVICE SPOTLIGHT: HOUSING SERVICES — RESPONDING TO THE RENT CRISIS

In 2017, myriad reports have documented the burgeoning rent crisis which threatens millions of families with a significantly lower standard of living, if not eviction and food insecurity.

Respond Now has worked unceasingly to keep our communities safe throughout its existence, but since 2013 has developed its housing services substantially in the form of an expanded mission which offers counseling to homebuyers, homeowners, low-to-moderate income renters, and the homeless. Features of these services include:

1. Free monthly HUD-approved Homebuyer Education Workshops, including financial education and detailed pre-purchase guidance, offered both day and evening;
2. Foreclosure prevention counseling, mortgage assistance funds from Illinois Hardest Hit, cash-for-keys assistance for non-retentive solutions, property tax appeals, tax redemption assistance, quitclaim deeds, and additional outside referrals;
3. Expanded reach via cooperation with partner agencies such as Catholic Charities, various local churches, and relevant municipalities and authorities.

A REAL IMPACT

Since the program expansion's inauguration, Respond Now has reached out to over 500 families, providing more than 350 counseling sessions. This effects a positive, stabilizing impact on the woefully neglected communities we serve.

Homelessness is a serious, growing, "invisible" problem even in the context of Wall Street's recovery. According to an NPR report, during a one-night count in January 553,742 people were found living outside, including 58,000 families with children. Respond Now wants our communities to know they are seen, to offer them whatever stability, safety, and hope that we possibly can. If we accept that society at large has failed them, we seek to respond with better.

"Respond Now's programs have morphed over the years I've volunteered here but always to address the changing needs of its constituents. That impresses me. For example, I think expanding programs in the housing arena has been a critically important 'morph' because of the potential stability it affords so many families and individuals."

*- Kathy Gallo,
Respond Now volunteer*

It's our people that drive positive change

Nothing that we've achieved could be accomplished without the support of our passionate volunteers, staff, and board members. We extend a very special thank you to all of those that have helped to make the south suburbs a better place to call home, every day.

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karen Yates, President
Sue Perkins, Treasurer
Margaret Lewis
Kelvin Oliver
Teri Gaby
McKenley Wilson III
Liz Wisnasky
Rev. Bob Klonowski, Secretary
Patrick Gallagher
Jamey Beringer

OUR EXECUTIVE STAFF

Carl Wolf, Executive Director
Anita Alvarado, Assistant Director

Most of all, a very heartfelt thank you to the 200+ volunteers that make Respond Now a reality!



Want to support your community as a volunteer?
Contact us at info@RespondNow.org
or visit www.RespondNow.org.

A very special thank you to our donors:

As local and federal governments discontinue key programs, our services are often front-line support for many of our neighbors. With an increase in community needs, generous donations from our donors and our corporate partners are what keep our organization afloat. We cannot thank you enough for your generosity and support!

Does your business want to make a difference in the community?

Corporate donors may contact us at info@respondnow.org to discuss potential sponsorship opportunities.



\$10,000+

Illinois Housing Development Authority
Housing Forward
Emergency Food and Shelter Program
Cook County
Chicago Community Trust
Aunt Martha's
Housing Action Illinois
United Way
Great Lakes Bank Foundation
Perkins Malo Hunter Gift Account
Ray Van Dyke
Anonymous
Van Eekeren Family
Ford Heights Community Service Org
James & Janice Gislason
Greater Chicago Food Depository (Food Donations)
South Suburban Council on Homelessness

\$2,500–\$9,999

MTD Group
Blowitz-Ridgeway Foundation
Gallagher Asphalt
CEDA
Thomas M Owens Foundation
Conroy Family
Flossmoor Service League
BMO Harris Bank
Macy's
Sue & Fred Perkins
Daniel J. Smith & Angela Murray
Dominican Sisters of Springfield
Kevin P. Filter
National Council of Jewish Women

\$1,000–\$2,499

Carla & Dennis Benard
Faith Evangelical Lutheran
Exelon Corporation
Faith United Protestant
Wally Burns Memorial Post No. 8077
Arkes Family Foundation
Robin L. Gallardi
Bimba Manufacturing Company
Franciscan Alliance
Action Sertoma Club
South Suburban Ministerial Association
Calvary United Protestant Church
Edgar & Phyllis Peara Trust
David Berg
Kathleen Gallo
Ida Hey
Flossmoor Community Church Women & Men
Linda Gattis
Cropwalk
Jack Gleason
Robert & Emilie Clifford
Dolores Wcisel
Deborah Costanza
Arcelor Mittal
United Christian Church
Suburban Service League
Robert & Theresa Bodee
Modestus Bauer Foundation

Richard Bellis
Kohl's
Robert & Kathryn Johnson
Jane Jahn
Thomas & Patricia Houlihan
Nicor Gas Company

\$500–\$999

Infant Jesus of Prague
Aurelia Nicholson
Thomas Hentschel
Ronald Robert Rezny
Otto Thilenius
Tom & Lynn Howland
Flossmoor Community Church
First Presbyterian Church Chicago Heights
Amy Pellettiere
Maria Owens
Jeff & Jackie Seeman
Snyder Family Foundation
Rev. Wayne Wurst
Terri Comerford
Robert & Audrey Fischer
Wintrust Financial Corp.
Donald Curtis
Jacqueline McLean
Mike Jordan State Farm Insurance
Warren Becker
Thomas Anderson
Natalie Lamb
Michael Lamb
Robert & Patricia Barker
Twenty Pearls Foundation
Marge Hedegard
Bloom Township
Katherine File
John Hudzik
Kathie Holland
Emmaus Community
Solvay Finance

UNDER \$500

South Suburban Interfaith Ministeries
Raymond Gummalauskas
Donald & Marilyn Thomas
First Presbyterian Church of Homewood
Benevity Community Impact Fund
Emily Wright
Murray Smith
Kenneth Voight
Olympia Fields Women's Club
Rochelle & George O'Hara
United Way of Central Indiana
Mary Wallace
Karen Abbott
Claire Richter
Richard & Kathleen Witt
St. Andrew United Methodist Church
NCLR
Helen A. Neel
Stanley Price
Jerome Dreyfuss
Gerald Smith
Kenneth Perkins
David Stafford

Susan Steele
M.A. Fleck
Thomas & Magda Hepokoski
Richard Stuckey
Linda Ugo
Marilyn Lorch
Thomas Engstrand
Connie Natvig
Lions Club of Chicago Heights
Robert Klonowski
Richard Pozdol
John Milwee
Alan Sturges
Michael Coogan
Equitrust Life Insurance
Margaret Lentes
Faye Predny
Kathryn Mangan
Erin Roeper
Kristine Lenrow
Faith Lutheran Church
Lindsie Miller
Sigma Kappa Alumnae
Salem Lutheran Church
Teri Gaby
Susan Gottlieb
Barbara Graves
Factory Bedding Company
Ruth Ibis
Charlene Jernegan
Richard King
Barbara Kossuth
Zarlengo Asphalt
Bill & Liz Wisnasky
Richard Lewis
Joan Coogan
Patrick Condon
Allen Murphy
City of Chicago Heights
John Newell
Georgene Nisivaco
Anthony Pasquinielli
Francis Pellettiere
Jean Browne
John Roach
Timothy Roach
Peter Wilkins
J. Silverstein
Bank of America Foundation
Vanguard Charitable
Arnie Bauer
St. Paul Community Church
St. Andrew United Methodist Church Women
Lola Proulx
Nicala Woolfolk
Michael Savage
First Apostolic Church
Patricia LaFond
Dr. James P. Kase
Joelyn Gosse
Rosemary Sprague
Joseph Zarlengo
Fred & Patrice Princehorn
Judith Gleitsman
John & Margaret Hayes

Myras Osman
William & Pamela Krueger
Techsoup
Christy Schmitt
Ezio Grossi
Leslie Langmeyer
Paul Gress
Truist
John & Judith O'Malley
Jerry & Kathleen Johnson
Lisanne Carlson
Warren Jernegan
John Doll
Michael Nicholas
John Ruggles
St. Kierans Women's Club
Bruce & Margaret Neel
Schwab Fund
June Cleary
Kay MacNeil
Janet Doran
Lawrence Mysz
James Murphy
Julie & John Curran
Roger Murdoch
Debra Connelly
Mount Carmel High School
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Rush
George & Denise Morris
Bernadette Wiscons
Irmgard Faulkner
Michael Sabal
Carol Downs
Edward Czapek
Barry Milliken
Marianne Waickman
M.G. Lorch
Sharon Cooper
Lawrence Mielcarz
Suzanne Davis
Serge De Bustros
Thomas Cooper
Jim & Jeri McIntyre
Carolyn Funk
Sharon Mcfadden
Barbara Dunay
Phyllis Mathews
Joyce Himmel
A Better Door & Window
Rodney Tollerson
Anne Keenan
Paul Tufts
Nancy & F. Patrick Kelly
Elizabeth Kennedy
Eleanor Frew
Margaret Wade
Kathleen Abalos
Jeanette Bartak
Robert Kossuth
Robert T. & Carol Gadomski
Alfred Dean
Linda Larson
Catherine Larocca
Charles Lantry
Obarski Janell

Johnson Marilyn
Betty Berg
Brandt & Noreen Oosterbaan
Louis Gdalman
Merrill Berg
George Bush
Patricia Barker
Anntionette Austin
Anita Pellettiere
Bernard Biegel
Thomas Brummel
Denny Schillings
David Brown
Margaret Wimsatt Lewis
Elaine Martin
Alexander Almes
Geraldine Piorkowski
G Riney
Wendy Posner
Charles Gill
David & Jennifer Dreyfuss
Travelers
Frank & Maureen Bella
I. Disilvestro
Michael & Mary Semik
Clayton Denton
Tops #111955
Mary Aubuchon
B. Don Pigg
Dennis Condon
Dennis Fink
Richard Schwab
Elizabeth Winicky
Mary Benton
Joseph Zulfer
Ellen Dreyfus
Diane Dubois
Christopher Boden
Grace United Women's Association
Helen Benaroya
Anita Flassig
Virginia Squires
Michael B. Connolly
Donna Attinello
Karyn Ahern
Project Search
Marjorie Broderick
Isabel Pimard
Joanne Boner
Sharen Berman
Lawrence & Nancy Burrows
Bill Rohaly
Olympia Fields United Methodist Women
David Carlson
Dave Carman
NIR Roof Care
Barbara Cellini
Paul Ruede
Margaret Childs
Claudette Pendleton
Communications Industries
Andrea Nadulek
Sean Ryan
Richard Zima
Cecil Mimms

Daniel Coogan
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Joyce Michael
Daniel A. Medrea
Sandra Norton
Maria McIntyre
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M. B. Mathias
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Patrick Lyons
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Joseph Daley
Sondra Setchell
Jack Sitterding Jr.
Wayne Muskievicz Tennis Shop
Joyce Beals
Elizabeth Koprowski
Roger Smith
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Edward Diluia
James Keller
Robert Keelan
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Ted Disabato
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Elizabeth Stern
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M.S. Street
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Patricia Stumpf
Brian C. Harrison
Pio & Mary Dell Uliassi
Brad & Shirley Armistead
Russell & Elizabeth Hall
Dorothy Hagestad
Jeanne Gummerson
Mary Gregoire
Judith Vicari
Daniel Flavin
Terrence Wagner
Sandra Freeburg
William Miller
Andrea Frey
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James Barnett
Shervin & Adele Freed
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Gretchen Hannan
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Linda Trout
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Loretta Rocznik
M. O'Leary
Margaret Monteleone
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Sally Kill
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Patricia Schanaberger
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Raymond Lowy
Zane Chait
Emily Inman
Deanna Martin
Josephine Leduc
W. M. Martin
Patricia de Freeuw
Patricia Huntoon
Richard Defreeuw
Allan Smith
South West Interfaith Team
Donna Malinak
Odell Perkins
Sarah Helm
Rowland Laird
Andrew Ross
Lisbet Temple



**Every dollar matters.
To donate to our goal
of ending the cycle of
hunger, please contact us
at info@respondnow.org,
visit respondnow.org,
or donate via PayPal to
“Respond Now”.**



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