

Macs with Mercy Helps Pat's Pantry Mark Five Years of Service

When Patrick Turney died suddenly at the age of 23, in September of 2019, his mother sought a way to share his spirit with others. Kathy Turney ultimately found comfort by establishing a food pantry in her son's name. Friends and neighbors rallied to ensure Pat's Pantry would brighten the lives of others - just like Pat, whom friends and neighbors had dubbed "the mayor of Mt. Greenwood," his mother recalls.

"It is so gratifying that so many people I did not even know joined our team," Turney recently said of the pantry, located at Community Church, 3509 W. 111th Street in Chicago. "Alderman Matt O'Shea and his staff, as well as so many others, stepped up to support our

new community service." Since 2021, Macs with Mercy, an inter-generational coalition of Mother McAuley students' clubs and Mercy Circle residents, meet monthly during the school year to support the mission of Pat's Pantry.

Today, Pat's Pantry serves more than three dozen families every Wednesday. "We are grateful to Kathy for finding the courage to convert her profound loss into a way of providing comfort to others. Our community shines brightest when we work together," stated O'Shea who attended January's meeting. "Seeing McAuley students and Mercy Circle residents work together is a heartwarming example of that spirit."

On Thursday, January 16th, Macs with Mercy kicked off 2025 by planning an ambitious food drive. The school's Varsity Club and Action Reaction Club students met with Mercy Circle residents to create an outreach campaign that spotlighted specific non-perishable items the pantry needs. After Turney shared her story about founding Pat's Pantry, O'Shea talked about how most people know neighbors who experience food insecurity right in the 19th Ward.

Inspired by what they heard, small groups claimed the two or three specific kinds of products they would champion and created 30 flyers to promote awareness about what to donate. "Many readers of 'The 19th Ward Quarterly' have seen these flyers as part of this awareness campaign, on eblasts from elected officials and community organizations, as well as through social media channels for the 19th Ward, the Village of Evergreen Park, the Beverly Area Planning Association, Mother McAuley, and Mercy Circle," explained Katie McKirdie, Mercy Circle's life enrichment coordinator. "The response has been tremendous. People dropped off their contributions at our main entrance, and we had to make room for more each morning."

On Thursday, February 13th, Macs with Mercy reconvened - this time with National Honor Society students from McAuley - to organize all the donations for transport to Pat's Pantry, and to gauge which flyers attracted the most responses.

While the Macs with Mercy food drive has concluded, Pat's Pantry welcomes volunteers; picks up food donations on Wednesdays between 3-6 p.m. and accepts monetary and gift card donations. To learn more, please contact Kathy Turney at patspantrymtgcc@gmail.com.

"Witnessing what Macs with Mercy accomplished in just a few weeks inspires us to do more," said Mike Levasseur, Mother McAuley's director of student life. "When generations come together to pursue a common purpose our students and Mercy Circle residents really benefit too."

Mercy Circle, a not-for-profit continuing care retirement community, has no entrance fee. Sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, it is the only faith-based senior living community on Chicago's Southwest Side. For more information or to schedule a private appointment, please call (773) 253-3600 or visit mercycircle.org.

