

OUR LADY OF MERCY HESED HOUSE MINISTRY

The OLM PADS/Hesed House Ministry is grateful for the grant award in the sum of \$3,000, from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), Diocese of Joliet, to support our work in feeding and caring for the unhoused population in our community, in partnership with Hesed House.

Caring for the poor and marginalized is a profoundly spiritual and sacred obligation, encapsulated in the parable of the Good Samaritan, where the faithful are each called to love God and neighbor. OLM PADS partners with Hesed House (the second largest homeless shelter in the state of Illinois), by supporting their mission “to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, and give people the chance to hope again”. Our ministry provides an essential pathway for those transformed by a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, to see His face in the person of the poor.

Our partnership commitment with Hesed House requires us to prepare, cook, deliver and serve dinner to guests at their family shelter, and their adult shelters, every first Tuesday of the month. With hunger and homelessness on the rise, we are currently providing meals and radical hospitality to 280 guests at Hesed House.

The meal preparation for our service day begins at the OLM kitchen where we have a team of volunteers who prepare, cook and package the food for delivery. The prepared meals are then transported to Hesed House, where a separate team of our volunteers help set up, serve dinner and clean up at the family and adult shelters. In addition our volunteers cook and deliver breakfast, and bagged lunches for use on the first Wednesday of each month.

Apart from our service day, we have an ongoing commitment to provide volunteers to serve dinner at Hesed House every third Friday of alternate months, when another church drops-off the meal, but has no volunteers. Consequently, our ministry plays an important part in ensuring a smooth machinery at Hesed House, by bridging the volunteer gap, and building up the Body of Christ, through a relationship of care and shared responsibility.

Given the scope and responsibility undertaken by our ministry, it takes a village to honor our partnership commitment with Hesed House. Through personal engagement, an appeal board, and our communication platforms, we galvanize our parish community to support our mission, and are heartwarmed by their generous response, which testifies to the work of the Holy Spirit, and the movement of grace.

We are deeply grateful for the CCHD grant, which we utilized to purchase an important appliance for our food based ministry, namely a commercial refrigerator. With the increase in guest numbers at Hesed House it has been a challenge for us to find sufficient holding space for donated food items, used to prepare our service day meals. The new refrigerator provides the additional space needed to secure/keep fresh perishable items donated on the drop-off weekend, prior to the service day. Thank you CCHD for your invaluable support in helping advance our mission of mercy. Alone we can do little, but together we can do so much more.