



Some 2017 Highlights

Last year we planned and participated with over 150 partner organizations in over 60 different events and activities with the help of 1,078 volunteers sacrificing 3,112 volunteer hours to participate in our mission.

Feeding the Hungry

Volume - 365 tons of food, clothes, books, home items

297 tons was food providing 495,000 meals which equals nearly one-half of the one-million meal food gap decrease in Will County in 2017

Frequency- 80 trucking events in greater Joliet area

60 different events we planned and/or participated
8 Community Service Events

Leverage- 150 partner organizations, local communities, and 1000's of volunteers

Fed 1,149 families totaling 4,783 people, plus 1400 hot meals, and collecting 15,638 items for Troops, schools, and pantries

Clothing and helping those in need- As for books, clothes, and home items, we collected 200 cubic yards which is close to two and one-half full semi-trucks packed completely full top to bottom and given to hundreds of local families in need.

Bringing Healing – screenings, tests, and dental services were made available to all who attended our “Love Thy Neighbor” events.

Providing a Helping Hand /Service Projects- 600+ Volunteers sacrificed time, talent, and treasure for projects to help the Northern IL Food Bank, Township Clean Up Day – Building of Community Gardens in Fairmont, Forest Park, Monee, Second Baptist Joliet USF / Joliet Catholic / Providence Catholic/ Lewis University Service Days where hundreds of students and staff pit their faith into action and helped accomplish many of good works. Service Projects for neighbors in need with minor repairs and clean up projects including providing a homeless man a place to live.

Protecting our environment- Recyclepalooza- 1,011 of the 1,494 vehicles told us they had HHW (68%) and 1,175 told us they had electronics (78%). The HHW station collected 113,862 which is the new “highest amount collected” at an HHW event in Will County”. a significant increase from last year but still within our pre-event estimate. 100,000 pounds of electronics were taken, we over filled the DART Styrofoam truck for the first time (!) we topped our previous wood recycling total reaching 160 yards and filled the scrap metal container as usual.

Scouts estimate 100+ flags collected.



Latex Paint Collection/ Reuse - 553 containers converted to 180 gal. of reusable paint for service projects. From 2012-2017 - 4011 collected and converted to 2, 227 gallons reused.

Workday Forest preserve District- participants cleared one- acre of honeysuckle invasive species cleared; 5 brush piles burned.

Jobs & Career Education:

JJC Tech Camp – sent 16 students from 3 low -income neighborhoods for a 4-day course covering 9 career options. We also hosted two job fairs: June 21st Job Fair – 100 job seekers / 60 employer partners and Sept 13th Job fair – 78 job seekers and 19 employer partners Through our job fairs and “Love Thy Neighbor” events we were able to connect 60 local employers to hundreds of job seekers resulting in an estimated 200 hires. Here is a testimony from one of our partners, *“To date since we started working with you great folks we have placed 37 individuals into positions... It has been a great partnership and we look forward to a continued partnership through the rest of 2017 and into the great 2018.”*

9/11 Patriot Day Celebration – in a celebration to remember, we were able to bring in a display of artifacts from the Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and the Flight 93 crash site. These artifacts were then put on display in the Rotunda of the New Lenox Village Hall for a week after.

A look ahead for 2018

We hope to acquire a truck with a lift gate to transport food, books, clothes, and items for our neighbors in need. According to the Northern Illinois Food Bank, last year the 11 Million meal gap in Will County went down to 10 Million. Of the one million extra meals provided, ShareFest was responsible for bridging the gap by 250, 000 meals. With a truck of our own and the continued sharing and caring events, we believe we can double our impact.

We hope to provide at least 4 “Love Thy Neighbor” events throughout the County. We hope to provide food to feed 5,000 people for a month, clothe them and give them books for a year, and connect them to our employer partners with local job that could last a lifetime.

We believe in investing in our youth and therefore, we hope to continue to collaborate with JJC to bring underprivileged students to experience careers in Manufacturing, Welding, Automotive, Computer Aided Design and Drafting (CADD), 3D Printing, Architecture, Engineering, and Construction, Orthotics and Prosthetics, Industrial Maintenance Technology, Electrical, and Robotics.

Recyclepalooza has been set for the second Saturday in September in New Lenox for the next 4 years and has turned out to be the premier reuse/recycling /collection event in the County.



Service projects are being discussed with our local schools, universities and colleges, and we hope to acquire more volunteers who have a desire to help our seniors, veterans, disabled and disadvantaged. With the NIFB project we were able to secure freezer/cooler unit that could be reused in as many as 3-4 other pantries This will take some planning, some volunteers, and some funding to complete.

This and more, of course, is all in the Lord's hand. We pray for the support from funders, sponsors, volunteers, partner organizations, and especially the Church and for event coordinators to help us follow the way in a daily walk throughout the year as we share and care for our neighbors in need.

God Bless You and please continue to keep ShareFest in your prayers!

Gary Cheney / **ShareFest**