

ACCELERATING CHANGE

THE IMPACT OF PRO BONO ON THE FIGHT TO END HUNGER

Lakeview Pantry

On any given week, Lakeview Pantry—one of Chicago’s largest and longest-running food pantries—has a minimum of 250 volunteer slots to fill. Community engagement is essential to every piece of the organization, as they run on an army of over 3,000 volunteers. Last year alone, the Pantry’s volunteer corps donated 4,200 hours of time: the equivalent to 21 full-time staff. Drew Moran, the Pantry’s Manager of Volunteers, is responsible for overseeing the hundreds of volunteers who come through their door every day looking for a meaningful way to give back.

THE NEED

The Pantry serves 3,500 clients each month with just 13 full-time staff members, so the needs of the organization are wide ranging—from administrative projects to picking up food with a cargo van. Drew has learned to let the Pantry’s volunteers gravitate toward the opportunities that excite them, finding that it makes for higher level of commitment and better follow through. Although the Pantry uses an on-line registration and orientation process, Drew also takes the time to get to know the volunteers, parsing out their personal and professional background and connecting one-on-one to locate their passions. This placement effort demands sophisticated volume management, and his approach quickly turns impractical without automated database oversight.

When Drew first started working at the Pantry four years ago, the organization was using paper applications, and volunteers were registered and scheduled for shifts over email. He and his team found their time monopolized by volunteer management data entry instead of strategizing on programs and services.

THE OPPORTUNITY

In facilitating Lakeview Pantry’s volunteer orientation program, Drew noticed that many of the organization’s volunteers were Salesforce employees taking advantage of the company’s volunteer time-off policy. Drew identified an opportunity to put these employees’ skills to use in implementing the Volunteers for Salesforce app. As skilled Salesforce experts, they knew how to use the platform fully and correctly. Labor intensive processes that once consumed staff time were replaced with automated validation rules or triggers, configured online sign-ups, and easy-to-use registration pages. As one example, when a prospective volunteer signs up to volunteer for the Pantry, they now receive an automatic email through Salesforce with an information packet and a link to find upcoming orientation sessions. Processes that don’t require personal touch are no longer done by hand.

This case study was made possible by the support of the Hunger Volunteer Connection, a program of the Alliance to End Hunger.



Image from Lakeview Pantry

THE IMPACT OF PRO BONO

As an ongoing and evolving project, Lakeview Pantry has had several Salesforce volunteers devote a few hours each month to amending and enhancing Salesforce’s features. To date, the Pantry’s Salesforce volunteers have spent approximately 80 hours configuring Volunteers for Salesforce and approximately 40 hours on case management database development. The Pantry has an aggressive strategic plan and intends to increase skilled volunteers throughout the organization, including securing two to three dedicated Salesforce volunteers who can make a monthly commitment to reviewing updates, developing clear understanding of the Pantry’s particular demands, and executing any necessary changes rapidly. The Salesforce implementation project has been fruitful, and Drew remains attuned to the ways that Lakeview Pantry can more fully embrace technology. His ultimate goal? A fully exhaustive platform integrated in Salesforce that would further engage volunteers, enable meaningful advocacy, and spread to pantries across the city to combat hunger.

You can find other case studies in this series [here](#) and learn more about Taproot’s commitment to using pro bono in the fight to end hunger [here](#).