



Food for today. Hope for tomorrow.

# Winter 2025 Quarterly Donor Impact Report

(Photo by Pratyush Swarup  
for Nourishing Hope.)





## A letter from our Interim CEO

Dear Nourishing Hope Community,

I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and are jumping into 2025 with fresh energy and optimism!

As we settle into the new year, we're seeing more and more people turn to us for help, and it's a reminder that our work is needed now more than ever. **We're committed to continuing to serve those who rely on us, because that's what we do.**

I also want to acknowledge our amazing former CEO, **Kellie O'Connell**. Over the past nine years, Kellie has led us with incredible vision, compassion, and dedication.

Kellie has a tremendous new opportunity as the CEO of the Illinois Region of the American Red Cross, and we wish her all the best in this new journey. [Click here for a note from Kellie and Board President Marc Brenner.](#)

While we will miss her leadership, our mission is clearer than ever: to fight hunger, build hope, and create lasting social impact for those who need it most.

Since our beginnings, **we've grown from a small food pantry into a \$19M+ social impact organization**, touching the lives of tens of thousands of Chicagoans each year. We've also seen a lot of growth in 2024, please [see our FY24 annual report](#) for all the details.

Thank you for being an essential part of the Nourishing Hope community. We can't do it without you.

With gratitude and hope for the year ahead,



**Jennie Hull**

Interim Chief Executive Officer

## TOY DRIVE 2024 WRAPPED

This past December, we had the pleasure of hosting our annual Toy Drive, and what a joyful experience it was!

Since 2010, Nourishing Hope has had the privilege of bringing holiday cheer to hundreds of families in our community. **This year, we served 580 children**, 30 more than last year — despite having just two days of distribution. It's proof that even in challenging times, community support truly works wonders.

One moment that captured the spirit of the day was when little **Riley** (pictured above), eyes wide with excitement, exclaimed, **"Wow! Yay! Thank you!"** Her joy was contagious, and it reminded us all of the power of giving.

This event is always one of our favorites. It reaffirms the incredible impact we can have when we come together.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed. Your generosity helps bring light to the holiday season for so many families.



**"Thank God and thank you all. What we have here will be all for our Christmas. Thank you very much."**

**– Mireidys, 32**



Read the full story at  
[nourishinghopechi.org/blog](https://nourishinghopechi.org/blog)

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## FOOD PROGRAMS UPDATE

So far this fiscal year, which began on April 1, we've served more than **49,000 people** — already surpassing our predicted number of neighbors for the entire year, with one more quarter yet to go.

This includes more than **6,500 families** with children. Thanks to the help of friends like you, we've been able to meet the rising need we're seeing.

We've sourced **more than 4.4 million pounds of food** so far, **93%** of which was donated. Thank you to our grocery partners and generous donors!



## NEW MANAGER OF SOCIAL SERVICES



Michael Rangel, LCSW  
Manager of Social Services

We're excited to welcome **Michael Rangel, LCSW** (pictured), as our Manager of Social Services. Michael (any pronouns) is working collaboratively across sites and teams to support our social services case managers and their clients. Michael holds a Master of Social Work from Loyola University Chicago and a Master of Arts in Critical Ethnic Studies and Women and Gender Studies from DePaul University.

This fiscal year, we have provided **4,675** social services, including **more than 2,100** free, trauma-informed mental health counseling sessions. We also provided **more than 2,500** case management services, which connect people to job, housing, and benefits assistance.

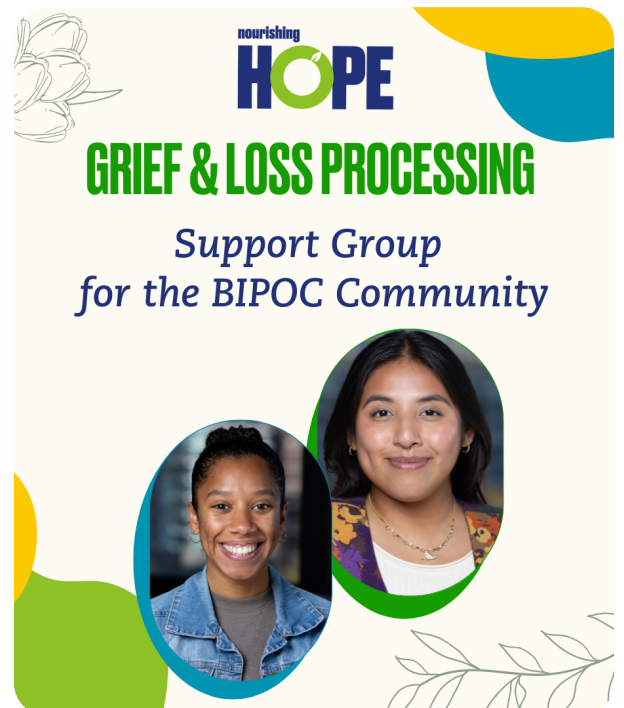
## NEW THERAPY GROUPS

Nourishing Hope will continue offering free, in-person therapy groups this year. The first of these groups started meeting this January — a **Grief & Loss Processing Support Group for the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color) Community**.

The group serves as an intentional space to process grief and the various forms of loss — both as individuals, and within a community. Facilitated by therapists Vanessa Garcia, MSW and Rachal Brooks, LPC, group participants have already developed a strong connection with one another.

Additional upcoming therapy groups include:

- a **Narrative Therapy Group** focused on managing depression and anxiety through the use of narrative therapy techniques; and
- a LGBTQIA+ Mental Wellness Counseling Group, **"I have a Queer-y."** This group is a safe space for those looking to explore queer identity and will be facilitated by queer counselors at various identity intersections.





# SAVE THE DATES!

It's going to be another fantastic year of Nourishing Hope events. **So please get out that calendar and mark these dates down.** Make no mistake, these events are critical to our fundraising efforts to support our programs and services.



**The End Hunger Social** is a festive gathering hosted by our **Young Leaders Board**. There will be music, dancing, bites, drinks (including non-alcoholic options) and our famous Wine Pull — all to benefit our mission of providing food for today and hope for tomorrow.

Last year, our End Hunger Social raised over \$73,000. This year, the goal is to raise **\$75,000**.

This year's End Hunger Social will be held on **Thursday, May 8**, at **Bandit**, 841 W Randolph St. While our End Hunger Social is tailored to young professionals, all who are 21 and older are welcome to attend.

Buy tickets and learn about sponsorship opportunities at [nourishinghopechi.org/endlungersocial](https://nourishinghopechi.org/endlungersocial).

If you are interested in making a contribution to the silent auction or joining us as an event sponsor please email [kayla.carter@nourishinghopechi.org](mailto:kayla.carter@nourishinghopechi.org). Stay tuned for more information on these fabulous events!



Please save the date for our largest annual fundraiser, the **Nourishing Hope Gala**, held on **Friday, Sept. 19** at The Geraghty at 6:30 p.m.

The essential funds raised at our annual gala support our work of providing food, mental health counseling and social services. **Last year, more than 600 people came together to fund the growing need that we're serving.**

If you like planning a big party for a good cause, please consider joining our gala committee! Contact **Kayla Carter**, director of institutional partnerships, for more information.



9.19 - AT THE -  
2025 GERAGHTY

6:30 PM



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

### RAY PARPAN – OUR LIFT HEAVY FOR HOPE CHAMPION!



*Volunteer Engagement Coordinator Julia Mendoza, Volunteer Ray Parpan, and Director of Volunteer Engagement Ciciely Tatum-Jouhnson pose for a photo at the competition's closing ceremony.*

Give it up for [Ray Parpan](#), our Lift Heavy for Hope volunteer champ! Ray went above and beyond in November and December, racking up the highest number of volunteer hours for heavy lifting shifts. His dedication makes him the first-ever winner of the Lift Heavy for Hope Competition!

Ray spent countless hours loading, unloading, shelving heavy boxes, and building and moving pallets at both our HQ and the Hub. His hard work and enthusiasm for the mission are truly inspiring. You can catch Ray climbing the pallet podium and receiving his trophy [in this special video](#) — don't miss it!

A huge thank you to Ray and all our Heavy Lifters who showed up during November and December — and throughout 2024 — to ensure our operations ran smoothly. Your support helps keep us going, and we couldn't do it without you.

At Nourishing Hope, it's volunteers like Ray who truly make us thrive. **Every hour of effort, every shift filled, and every helping hand directly impacts our ability to provide food and support to those who need it most.** Volunteers are the heart of our work, and with people like Ray, we're able to continue making a difference year after year.

Feeling inspired? Want to challenge Ray's title next time? Sign up for a heavy lifting shift or two and get ready to compete in the next edition of Lift Heavy for Hope!

Check out available shifts at [nourishinghopechi.org/volunteer](https://nourishinghopechi.org/volunteer).



We recently appeared in Time Magazine, the Associated Press, and dozens of media outlets. Our former CEO, Kellie O'Connell, was interviewed on the rescinded memo freezing spending on federal loans and grants. Nourishing Hope receives roughly 20% of our food budget from the federal government.

## From Time Magazine:

*If their federal funds were frozen, O'Connell said, they could make it a few weeks. But the wider concern was the possible end of assistance, like food stamps, which would increase demand on her organization.*

*"If that were to significantly diminish or get eliminated, it will be nearly impossible for the charity food system to step up," she said of food stamps. "It would be potentially catastrophic for our communities."*

Nourishing Hope also hosted Fred from [The Fred Show](#). Fred and his team volunteered at the Hub and donated a van of refrigerated and shelf-stable food. Thank you to Amy Witherite and 1-800-Truck-Wreck for partnering with The Fred Show for this generous donation and volunteer day!



(Photo credit: Ben Lipowitz for Nourishing



Don't miss out on our full report from fiscal year 2024. Read about our growth, your impact, our community partners and more.



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Nourishing Hope is one of the largest and longest-operating hunger relief organizations in Chicago, providing the equivalent of more than 4.5 million meals each year.

Our mission: Nourishing Hope through food, mental health and social services so that all of our neighbors can thrive.

Our vision: A city where all people have the resources needed for a dignified life.