

## **OUR LADY OF MERCY HESED HOUSE MINISTRY**

Our Lady of Mercy Church Hesed House Ministry (OLM PADS), is honored and grateful to be awarded the Catholic Campaign For Human Development (CCHD) grant, in the sum of \$1500, in recognition of our work in alleviating hunger and food insecurity, experienced by our neighbors in need.

OLM PADS partners with Hesed House (the second largest homeless shelter in the state of Illinois), to support their mission “to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, and give people the chance to hope again”. Our ministry is rooted in missionary discipleship. Evangelized by our faith, and transformed by our personal encounter with Jesus Christ, we see His face in the person of the poor and vulnerable, and extend His pervasive grace through our service, care and radical hospitality.

Every first Tuesday of the month, our volunteers prepare, cook, deliver and serve dinner to about 250 guests at Hesed House. In addition our volunteers cook and deliver breakfast, and bagged lunches for use on the first Wednesday of each month. Our service day meal preparation begins at the OLM kitchen where our team of volunteers 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.

Additionally, we work with Hesed House to field our volunteers to help on days outside our monthly service day, when their other partnerships are struggling to find volunteers. Consequently, our ministry plays an important part in ensuring a smooth machinery at Hesed House, by filling the volunteer gap, and building up the Body of Christ.

Feeding the hungry is an expression of love. Scripture reminds us that God has a special love for the poor, and through the work of our ministry, we act as ambassadors of God’s love and honor our holy obligation to care for those living in poverty.

Fulfilling our monthly commitment at the current scope and magnitude requires significant spiritual, physical, and financial resources. We are incredibly moved by the unwavering support of our Pastor, parish community and our team of committed volunteers, who are pivotal to the strength, and success of this ministry. We promote the work of our ministry and mobilize our faith community through personal engagement, an “appeal” board, and digital media, and are gratified by the generous support in time, talent and treasure.

We are also profoundly grateful for the support of the CCHD in selecting us for the 2024 grant award. The money will be invaluable to help offset the costs/expenses incurred in purchasing food packaging, storage and supplies used to transfer the food from our church kitchen to Hesed House. We owe a debt of gratitude to the CCHD for their extraordinary work in identifying and supporting causes that reflect the Gospel values of love, mercy, humility, justice and charity. Thank you CCHD for partnering with us to advance the mission of Jesus Christ, and for supporting us in our shared responsibility to promote the common good.