

## ***The Scoop!***

The Roberti Community House (RCH) opened its doors five years ago with the simple goal of providing a safe and peaceful place where adults and children could come together. Since then it has developed into an incredibly lively, happy house where neighbors gather on a daily basis to share their stories, their recipes, their skills, and, above all, their support for one another!

We have accomplished so much and yet there is so much more that we want to do. In order to have sufficient room for future endeavors, we've purchased a second house in the community—the **RCH II!** It's just a short block from our current location. We're excited by this new venture and by the enormous possibilities it offers for expanding our work in the community.

As with many older homes that have not been well maintained, this house will require considerable rehabbing. An early estimate of the cost is approximately \$110,000. We need your support more than ever this year, both financially and through in-kind construction and other related services, to help make the **RCH II** a successful, well functioning reality!



The exterior of the RCHII.



Volunteers Lydia Grabemann (left) and Vic Winandy (right) stand in the soon-to-be kitchen of the RCHII. These individuals have been outstandingly helpful and resourceful during the early stages of developing our new facility.

## Meet Amor

Amor has been coming to the community house and participating in many of our programs for more than a year. Initially quiet and somewhat shy, her confidence has grown, and she now helps lead sewing classes. Truly comfortable now at the RCH, Amor has blossomed into a beautiful and delightful friend to so many of us. Amor is a favorite instructor in our sewing class—she is the person who taught all of us to make such lovely crocheted hats! Amor lives some distance from the RCH and although it may sometimes be a struggle, she manages to join us every week. At home she is responsible for caring for her 90+ year old mother. Before coming to the RCH, Amor felt isolated and had little support. The RCH has offered her a new lease on life—she is now an integral part of a warm and welcoming community.



Amor (left) and her sister, Hortensia (right).

## Holiday Celebrations

During the past few months, we've spent a lot of time in the kitchen preparing for and enjoying holiday celebrations. In November, we gathered with neighbors over a wonderful meal to give thanks for our many blessings. Food, Fun, and Friendship rocked the kitchen with joyous song and great food for a fantastic December feast. We reconvened our Junior Chef classes for children during the winter holidays. The kids loved learning how to make a variety of new dishes. However, the best part was always sitting down together and enjoying the foods they had just prepared!

## **New Programs**

### **Outreach to the poor, hungry, and homeless in Waukegan**

The RCH has actively partnered with Sister Peggy and the Holy Family Food Pantry's weekly outreach efforts to Waukegan's homeless. We load the truck every Monday with hot coffee, sandwiches prepared by moms at the RCH, and snacks donated by students at St. Mary's school in Lake Forest and then travel throughout the area where we find so many people waiting for us. In addition to providing information about helpful community resources, the outreach program brings enormous comfort and support to this population.



### **Pre-school Reading Program**

For an hour every Wednesday morning, neighborhood moms come to the RCH with their children between three and six years of age for a program that reinforces basic kindergarten readiness skills. During story time, volunteers share with the group some of our favorite books and encourage parents and children to read together.



### **Ongoing Programming**

Enthusiasm for, and participation in, all of our programs continues to grow. Programs such as cooking, sewing, and yoga offer separate classes for both adults and children. There is always a full house for our after-school program that offers help with homework, sewing for tweens, yoga and wellness, dance, and engaging science projects. With assistance from our terrific volunteers, we are able to provide hungry children with a nutritional meal that includes a protein, vegetable, bread, and a fruit. For many kids this represents the most balanced meal they eat each week.

Our high school volunteers now include students from Cristo Rey, Stevenson, Lake Forest, Libertyville, and Gurnee—they're an awesome group of teens!!

Thanks to all of our amazing and committed volunteers we were able to offer programming to the community throughout the holiday season. If you are interested in joining us as a volunteer, please contact Pam at

[volunteerRCH@gmail.com](mailto:volunteerRCH@gmail.com). We'd love to hear from you!



A small sample of our wonderful staff of volunteers at the RCH.

### Wish List

Our needs are many and your assistance is always appreciated. Our Wish List includes:

- A **refrigerator** (we need additional refrigeration in order to store the produce we distribute throughout the summer)
- Two (2) large pop-up **canopy tents** to provide shade in the gardens
- Four (4) six-foot **folding tables**
- Thirty (30) **folding chairs**

We appreciate your continuing interest and support! Please consider donating to the renovation of **RCH II** — thank you!