



## Fall food drives fill growing need in Chicago area

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**Evelyn Holmes**

November 19, 2011 (CHICAGO) (WLS) -- Many Americans will sit down Thursday at tables overflowing with food. But with the difficult economy, many people are having trouble feeding their families.

Some Americans are turning to food pantries and other sources of help. The lines are long because the need is already great for many this holiday season.

"When families come together and they are able to eat, that brings happiness and we need that sense of happiness and pride back in the family," Alderman Emma Mitts said.

For an eleventh year, Alderman Mitts and volunteers from her 37th Ward organization gave away -- turkeys to 1200 families for this year's Thanksgiving event.

"Oh, it helps out a lot for people who have lost their jobs stuff like that. It helps the family," Millicent Gillespie, 37 Ward resident, said.

On the city's North Side, the bags of food were delivered to those in need in advance of the upcoming holiday as part of a fall food drive sponsored by State Rep. Sara Feigenholtz and the Lakeview Pantry.

"There always seems to be an increase in the number of clients we service on holidays. Today, everyone is getting ready for thanksgiving, so we're trying to accommodate that," Lothar Greski, Lakeview Pantry, said.

That seems to get more difficult every year. Area food banks like the Greater Chicago Food Depository have teamed up with grocer Dominick's and ABC7 again. Chicago's non-profit food bank supplies 650 pantries and food kitchens across the Chicago area and hopes to collect thousands of pounds of non-perishable food in order to feed hungry people.

"In the past 3 years, we've seen an increase of about 58-percent in the number of people who are turning to pantries and soup kitchens. So we know this year is going to be a challenge and in particular it's hard for families to get by," said Bob Dolgan, Greater Chicago Food Depository.

An off-shoot of the Occupy Wall Street movement asked for donations for their food drive event during a weekend march. The members of Occupy Naperville say the goal of collecting the canned goods will benefit those affected by what they call an ongoing economic injustice.