October marks 25th year of EWAN serving the community

On October 1, 1997, the Elmhurst Walk-In Ministry (as it was known then) opened its doors for the first time. Working out of the corner of a church office, it had $200 available for assistance.

For nine months founders Rev. Harriet Martin, Jan Edgley, and Carol Yesko, on staff at three different Elmhurst churches, had worked on this concept of creating a central clearinghouse to more effectively help people in the community with emergency financial needs.

Finally, according to Edgley, they “just had to open up and do it.” They determined if they waited for just the right time it would never happen. The original office was sectioned off from Edgley’s office located at that time at the First Congregtional Church. With the support of most Elmhurst churches, a few community partners, and a freshly trained group of volunteers, they began helping people seeking assistance.

Word of the new service appears to have caught on fairly quickly, as it served 390 people that first year. In the early years, there was more emphasis on serving a transient population, with many more gas, sandwich, and food vouchers given out. Over the years, services have focused more on Elmhurst residents with the biggest portion of assistance going towards rent and utility bills.

The Immaculate Conception Food Pantry opened up in 1999 as an added point of service for EWAN. It served 91 people in its first year. It would soon grow to serve 5 to 10 times that number annually. Clients continue to come to EWAN to get vouchers for the pantry.

Throughout its twenty-five years, services have been added to EWAN. Shoe vouchers were added in 2008. Not too long after, the Student With Activity Needs fund was established as was a School

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To hear more about EWAN’s history, check out episode 15 of “Elmhurst: Our Community” on YouTube hosted by Elmhurst Community Bank Vice President, Ken Bartels (left). In this episode, Ken sits down with EWAN founder, Jan Edgley (center) and Executive Director Jackie Crnkovich (right) to hear about how EWAN got started, where it has come, and how it has been affected by the pandemic.
EWAN marks 25 years, continued

Snack Program. The Hope Fund was established in 2014, and Dental assistance in 2017. Around that same time, the Medical Assistance category was expanded to cover some bills beyond prescription drugs. And just this year, services for pets have become available through the Judy Molter Pet Fund.

A couple other major changes were in store as well. In 2014, the continued growth of EWAN necessitated the hiring of an executive director to manage the increasingly complex needs of the organization.

In 2016 the board decided to change the name from the Elmhurst Walk-In Ministry to the Elmhurst Walk-In Assistance Network.

While in an ideal world EWAN’s services wouldn’t be needed, it has not yet been put out of business. It has seen people through the Great Recession, and the COVID pandemic. In between those big events, it has helped people weather job losses, divorces, illnesses, and other major life events.

In an often fractured world Elmhurst residents can all be proud to live in a community where so many residents, civic organizations, and businesses actively look out for the needs of our neighbors by supporting this important mission.

Every birthday deserves a party; EWAN’s was an ice cream social

Current and former volunteers, board members, and supporters came out to celebrate the 25-year milestone with ice cream and cake. Attendees enjoyed the treats while catching up and sharing stories with others dedicated to the EWAN mission. EWAN is grateful to Cary Kanno for providing beautiful music for the event, and to Kilwins for donating the ice cream.
2nd annual back to school fair helps kids start year off right

The Elmhurst Resource Collaboration (ERC) once again offered a Back to School, Health, and Resource Fair to help District families get off to the best possible start this school year. In its second year, the fair moved to York High School which provided ample space for medical services including physicals as well as dental, hearing, and vision checks; school supply, books, and spirit wear giveaways; and well over 50 agencies showcasing services. Over 400 families attended the event, and 530 kids received a free backpack.

The ERC is made up of local service organizations, school personnel, and area non-profits, including EWAN, working together to meet the needs of the most vulnerable families living and/or going to school in Elmhurst.

High housing prices are reflected in EWAN’s 2022 assistance

The assistance dollars EWAN has given so far in 2022 reflect some of the economic challenges the nation at large is facing.

Overall assistance has increased 23% over 2021. Absent of the federal aid that was prevalent in 2021, coupled with inflation, more people are left in need.

Also, DuPage County is in no way immune from the high housing costs plaguing the nation as a whole. Affordable rents are increasingly hard to find in the area. Even a small bump in the road can leave people vulnerable.

To help combat the effects of inflation, EWAN was generous with gas cards this summer and also distributed gift cards to families preparing to go back to school.
2022 ‘Cue for a Cause brings grills, thrills, and family fun

Winners of the 2022 ‘Cue

Grand Champion:
Big Daddy Q, Mike Juneman

Runner Up: Advantage Trailer, Justin Potts

Best Sauce:
Fallin’ off the Bone, Dan Gibbons
Webster Grillers, Mike Bush
Birds & Bones, Bill Caron

People’s Choice Sauce:
Sweet William BBQ, William Steber
Haber Cue, Joel Haberkorn
Big Daddy Q, Mike Juneman

Best Chicken in Elmhurst:
Big Daddy Q, Mike Juneman
TW Chicago #2, Kevin Kenny
Haber Cue, Joel Haberkorn

Best Ribs in Elmhurst:
Advantage Trailer BBQ, Justin Potts
Big Daddy Q, Mike Juneman
Smokin’ – No Papers, James Allen

Thank you to our 2022 ‘Cue for a Cause Sponsors!

Full Boar ($5,000)
C&C Power

Boss Hog ($2,500)
Barbeque Jim’s / Edward-Elmhurst Health
Kelly Stetler Real Estate-Compass / John & Jeanne Kett

Whole Hog ($1,000)

Alan & Kari Conkle / Elmhurst Bank / Frank Troost / Friends of Leo Reedy / Golf Group & Friends
JProctor Group @Properties / Jill & Kevin York / Lakeside Bank / Mehta Motors / New Home Star
Ralph & Vida Cruz / W.S. Darley & Co.

Full Slab ($500)
Community Bank of Elmhurst / DGTT Foundation / Itasca Bank & Trust / Marilyn Arado / Mary Hallman
Mike Hauert, Hauert Law / Silverado Grill / SJ Mallein & Associates / Wisdom Eldercare

Half Slab ($250)
AMS Industries, Inc. / Bill & Dawn Muckian / Diane Emich / Elmhurst Tail Gate Inc./ Ever Onward / Grayson & Carol Haller / Greenline Environmental Solutions / Joe & Kathy Buffo / John & Vicki Julian / Light Energy Resources, Inc. / Mike & Christine Juneman / Mike & Leslie Amiot / Out of Towners Book Club / Tom & Julie Wolfe / Tony & Mary Pierotti / Women of Bethel UCC

Bacon ($100)
‘Cue raises $46,440 for EWAN

Gray skies were no deterrent to attendance to this year’s ‘Cue for a Cause, drawing the biggest crowds to date. Seventeen teams competed in the barbecue competition, also an increase.

All this led to a great vibe, as attendees enjoyed the music, family activities, raffles, and good food and drink while the competitors duked it out over their grills. Three bands—Simply Sound, Lake Effect, and Common Area Maintenance—kept the parking lot rocking.

Mark your calendars for September 3, 2023 for the next ‘Cue for a Cause.
EWAN Annual Appeal, coming soon to a mailbox near you...Give 25 for 25

While the ‘Cue for a Cause is EWAN’s most fun fund-raiser, the Annual Appeal actually accounts for the greatest percentage of its annual income.

Letters for our Annual Appeal will go out next month. We know there is no shortage of worthy causes and organizations to support, and we truly appreciate any amount you are able to give. When you give to EWAN, you know that your dollars are being spent locally on the people in need right here in our community.

If you are a regular donor, think about marking EWAN's 25th anniversary with an extra $25 or an extra 25%! If you’ve never given before, consider starting this year with $25 dollars for twenty-five years.

Whatever you are able to give will be a demonstration of care and concern for our Elmhurst community.

Just can’t wait for that annual appeal letter to arrive in the mail? Follow this QR code to the EWAN website and donate on-line.

The EWAN office is working on collecting the email addresses of our donors. Don’t worry, there’s no danger of receiving daily, weekly, or even monthly messages from us, but it is a good and cost effective way to communicate with our supporters. Please consider sharing your email address with us by emailing us at contact@elmhurstwalkin.org. Write “Email address” in the subject line and be sure to provide your name in the body.

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