



### Member Testimonials

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## **Animal Protective League of Springfield and Sangamon County** for Community Shares

The Animal Protective League (APL) is unique among Central Illinois animal-rescue organizations because our first priority is caring for the most vulnerable cats and dogs—ones that are sick, injured, stray, or have been surrendered to animal control agencies, placing them at risk for euthanasia. Each year we take in 2,000 or more and adopt them into new, loving homes. Our mission to end the euthanasia of healthy cats and dogs prompted us to open a high-quality, low-cost spay/neuter clinic in 2006 where our veterinarians perform more than 12,000 surgeries each year to help curb the over-population that drives abuse, neglect, and abandonment.

APL's services are open to all individuals, regardless of income level. The spay/neuter clinic's services, which include monthly wellness clinics, are intended to encourage pet owners of limited means to keep their pets vaccinated against communicable diseases. While many of our clinic users are from Sangamon County, we extend the reach of our spay/neuter services by providing transportation for rescue groups and animal-control facilities within a 90-mile radius of Springfield.

In our shelter, our staff cares for as many as 150 cats and dogs each day, 365 days a year. Veterinarians oversee their care, providing lifesaving surgeries when a stray cat or dog has been injured, while animal attendants administer medications and medical treatments that speed healing. Many of the animals entering our doors only require such routine care as vaccinations, a steady diet, and shelter until new homes are found. Foster caretakers—volunteers who take the very young, the very scared, and the very old into their homes—help us save hundreds of kittens and puppies as well as adult cats and dogs.

Mindful that providing support to pet owners can help keep their animal companions in their homes, APL offers a pet-food-bank, emergency services when pet owners have no other option for treatment, and very-low-cost spay/neuter. Our humane educators reach out to groups of children to teach a new generation how to be kind to all animals.

Although we have continued to operate both our shelter and spay/neuter clinic without interruption during the pandemic, we have lost important sources of income as well as opportunities to engage our volunteers. To maintain social distancing for the safety of our staff and the public, we have limited the number of visitors to the shelter by requiring appointments to view adoptable animals. That has significantly reduced “browsing” for new pets, which in turn has reduced the number of adoptions and the income we receive from adoption fees. All of our in-person fundraising has been cancelled, resulting in the loss of considerable revenue.

More pet owners are using our low-cost spay/neuter services in 2020 than during the same period last year. While the number of people using our pet-food-bank is virtually unchanged from 2019, two church foodbanks and one senior citizens group requested pet food from us that they are distributing to their clients. We are continuing to provide wellness services, although we have altered the format of our monthly walk-in clinics to limit person-to-person contact.

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, APL continues to provide services that rescue, protect, and support animals and the people who love them.

## Champaign County Health Care Consumers Testimonial

At Champaign County Health Care Consumers we offer services to anyone who is in need of an advocate to assist with navigating their health care coverage. Champaign County is our primary service area and with a diverse population partly due to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the growing immigrant population we have a mix of new and long-standing community members. We can assist families who are experiencing for the first time what it means to get insurance for themselves as well as offer other supporting services that they might not be aware of. Our clients span generations. We have helped provide people care from birth to end of life. Currently we have capacity to accommodate English and Spanish speakers but have built ties in the community with other organizations to bridge the language barrier even further.

Some of the services we provide are signing up for insurance through the healthcare marketplace ([Healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov)), Medicaid through the State of Illinois ([abe.illinois.gov](https://www.abe.illinois.gov)), and hospital financial assistance for our local health care providers. Even though we are focused on Champaign County we are connected to a larger network of Community Health Workers which can sometimes mean we are working with clients in other counties and even other states. We do our best to refer clients to partner agencies and make sure that people are receiving the best help they can get if we are unable to assist. In addition to those main services we also offer linkage to dental, vision, and other public benefits such as Supplemental Food Assistance (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), emergency prescription funds, Medicare Part D enrollments (prescription coverage) and more.

With COVID-19 forcing changes in our community we have had to adapt our way of offering services. Our staff is equipped to continue providing one on one appointments with clients over the phone, via email, and video calls. We have adapted our outreach as well but have also maintained communication via mail because we know that even with the technology at our disposal not all of our clients have access to the same communication platforms. We have explored additional funding and services due to COVID relief funds becoming available and are working towards making sure that the most vulnerable populations in our community are looked after. We have been able to expand financial assistance for prescriptions and medical devices to clients that have been in need. We continue to work through every individuals' needs to make sure that the healthcare system works for them not against them.

## Champaign County Humane Society Testimonial

CCHS has been honored to serve Champaign County for well over 70 years. Adoptions here are as much about people as they are about animals. With a commitment to placing shelter animals in new permanent homes, our adoption counselors go to great lengths to learn what each adopter is looking for in a pet to find the best possible match. We don't stop there. We have an animal behavior specialist on staff to answer any follow-up questions and provide ongoing support. We also provide affordable dog and puppy training classes to help new dog owners learn basic training techniques to help their dogs become happy and well-behaved family companions.

On the intake side, we are the only open-admission animal shelter and adoption center in Champaign County, which means we accept all companion animals in need of a new home without question.

Our Medical Department includes a veterinarian, five staff members, and prior to COVID, several interns and volunteers. In addition to basic medical care, our Medical Department provides life-saving surgeries and treatments. Long term care and rehabilitation following serious illness or injury is made possible by our dedicated foster volunteers.

Last year, more than 550 volunteers donated more than 23,000 hours of their time to our cause. That's more than 11 full-time positions.

We have a small staff, around 20-25, and prior to COVID-19, we relied heavily on our volunteers to keep operations running. Our volunteers helped in every aspect of our mission, from scrubbing cages and food bowls, to walking dogs (even on holidays and in all kinds of weather), to fundraising, photography, and even the most mundane administrative tasks. Volunteers also socialized our small animals and provided cats with time outside of cages for play and exercise.

Due to COVID-19, we have not been able to have our volunteers at the shelter. Our medical, animal care, and adoption staff have been working tirelessly to keep operations running and fill the gaps. We have learned that regardless of COVID-19, people love animals and want to adopt them. In fact, in August 2020, we adopted out over 140 cats, one of our best months on record.

The demands for our services are high, and we miss our volunteers. Donations are critical during this time to support our operations and staff.



## Meals on Wheels Chicago

### Impact

Meals on Wheels Chicago raises funds to ensure seniors and individuals with disabilities benefit from nutritious meal programs that improve their quality of life and maximize independence. We envision a community in which all basic needs are met and barriers to achieving independence are eliminated.

It starts with a meal, but what we provide is so much more. Our clients are some of the most vulnerable people in our community, and the home meal delivery program provides meaningful connections that help them maintain their independence and dignity.

### Programs We Fund

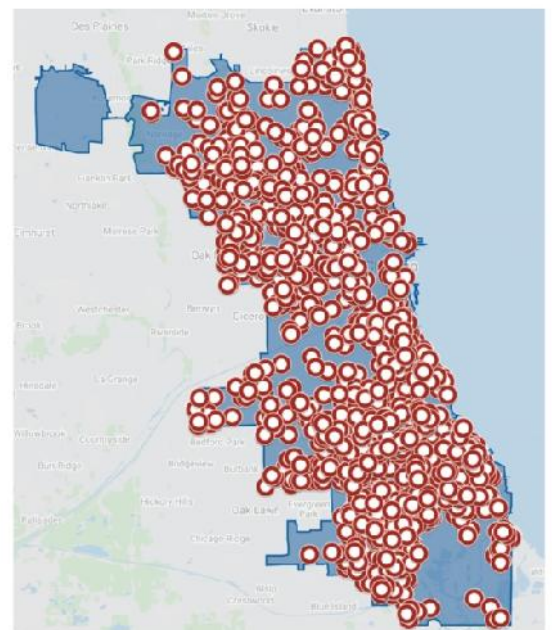
- **Holiday Meals Program:** The Holiday Meals Delivery Program for Chicago's Senior Citizens addresses unmet nutritional needs on six federal holidays, delivering meals to homebound seniors over the age of 60. In doing so, MOWC provides clients with nutrition and a greater measure of independence to help stabilize their home environments.
- **Home Delivered Meals for Individuals with Disabilities:** For individuals with disabilities under the age of 60, the HDMID program offers in-home weekday meal service for those challenged by the preparation of meals in addition to meals delivered on the six federal holidays.
- **The Emergency Meals Fund:** When budget allows, Meals on Wheels Chicago provides funding for emergency, shelf-stable meals. These are delivered to HMP and HDMID clients to serve as back-up meals if regular delivery service is interrupted by extreme weather or other unforeseen circumstances.
- **Congregate Senior Meal Program:** This program supplements the City of Chicago's congregate lunches at the six main senior centers and the smaller satellite locations, where approximately 30,000 seniors are fed each year. For many seniors, this lunch may be their only meal of the day and their only social interaction. Corporations also provide funding for an additional take-home meal for later that evening.

### Current Program Enrollment and COVID's impact

The current health crisis created an unprecedented surge in demand for the home meal delivery program. Almost overnight, the program saw enrollment increase by 67% and almost 10,500 individuals are now regularly receiving meal deliveries. Meals on Wheels Chicago serves a very diverse community, with 66% of clients self-reporting as minority (African American, Hispanic, Asian). Most clients live at or below the poverty level (65%), and an increasing number are above the age of 85 (26% in 2019). We aim to relieve some of the financial hardship caused by social and economic injustices that exist in our society. The program serves clients in all 77 community areas in Chicago.

Seniors who were previously not considered homebound now qualify for the program as guidance from health and government officials keeps them isolated at home in order to avoid infection. Those who either shopped for themselves or who had family help with the shopping are now in need of assistance, and our program has helped them adapt to the "new normal." We anticipate enrollment to continue to grow, both due to normal factors (larger portion if the population is living longer and retirement savings aren't going as far) as well as continued fallout from COVID-19 and the economic downturn. To learn more please visit [www.mealsonwheelschicago.org](http://www.mealsonwheelschicago.org)

Meals on Wheels Chicago  
Service map 2020





WEFT Community Radio is dedicated to the important part we play in the lives of our local and global neighbors. We take pride that people, local businesses and small grants fund WEFT. We are grateful for our grassroots support.

WEFT is 100% volunteer-driven. Our tech support volunteers troubleshoot and fix technology on the spot. Keeping us on the air is a priority for them. Early in 2020, a small group of volunteers planned for and installed a new broadcast antenna, after its rented location was condemned. New equipment was mounted on a nearby tower at an expense of almost \$50,000, covered by donations from listeners.

Typically, WEFT raises most of its donations through the contributions of individual listeners during March and September pledge drives, accounting for \$30,000 total for the year if all goes well not a lot to run a non-profit for going on 40 years. When the pandemic arrived in March, it changed life at WEFT in a variety of ways. We ultimately cancelled both of our pledge drives for the fiscal year out of concern for our volunteers and listeners but continued to inform everyone with critical information and resources through our website, public service announcements, news and interviews.

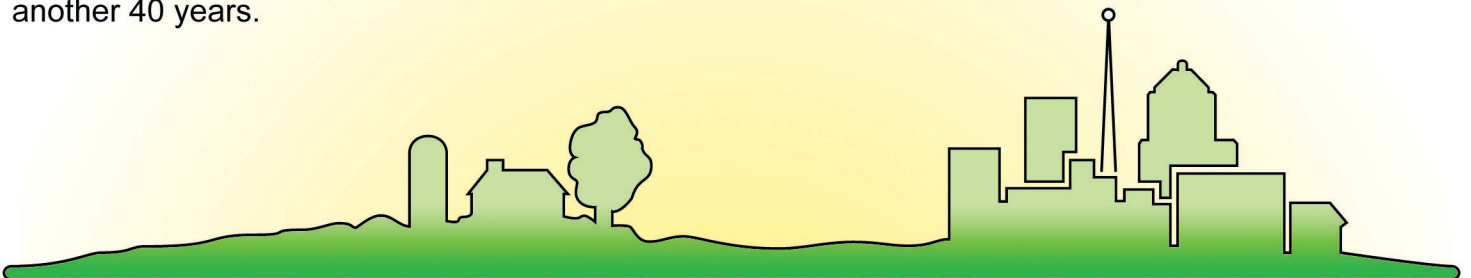
Except for a few volunteers who produced shows in the studio, a dedicated group of volunteers formed the Remote Access Team (RAT) and provided much of our programming. The RAT took responsibility for connecting with show hosts, some who produced their programs at home for later play at the station. Through their creativity, WEFT was temporarily converted to a mainly remote operation, staying on the air 24 hours a day with few on-site volunteers. WEFT continues to serve our communities, both over the airwaves and online without interruption as volunteers venture into the work of radio again.

In some ways, WEFT's relationship with the pandemic has helped us to stretch, to grow, and to become stronger than ever before. The many committees that keep the station running, meet via Zoom. At last count, 12 committees have met or scheduled to meet in September. Programming, Music, Financial Development, Social Media, the Board of Directors and others continue to problem solve and make WEFT work on the proverbial shoestring.

In times of crisis, small businesses, non-profits, local musicians, and countless others face enormous challenges. Supporting each other will help us come out as better people and stronger communities. For that, WEFT plays a vital role.

WEFT's strength is producing *Ear Art with Heart*. WEFT volunteers provide the *Heart*. WEFTies are neighbors, workmates, friends and acquaintances. They are crossing guards, musicians, electricians, artists, professors, students, Moms, Dads, retirees, pastors, lawyers, computer technicians, waiters, engineers and more. They represent the diverse array of people that WEFT serves.

*Ear Art with Heart* means that our volunteers unequivocally love the music they play and research the topics they discuss. They do more than just play music. They curate. They do it for themselves, for sure, because its fun to be on the radio, but mainly they do it for the community! They expose listeners to music or information never heard on commercial radio, a mission that WEFT hopes to continue for another 40 years.



### Wesley Food Pantry, Urbana IL

The mission of the Wesley Food Pantry is to alleviate food insecurity by providing a week's worth of nutritious groceries. The pantry has two food distribution sites, one in Urbana on the University of Illinois campus, and the other in Champaign at Parkland Community College. Both locations are open to all residents of Champaign County. Before the pandemic, we operated on a "client-choice model" which means pantry guests can select the food items their families most need and will eat. This model respects the dignity of the shopper, giving them license to make decisions about their family's tastes. Volunteers assist clients in registering, selecting, packing, and transporting their groceries to their vehicles. In the first half of 2020, we have provided food to over 1500 families including 1000 children.

The Wesley Food Pantry has adopted a food nutrition policy with the goal of supporting shoppers to make balanced, healthy food choices. Using the federal MyPlate guidelines and Feeding America's *Foods to Encourage*, we acquire, purchase, and distribute healthy food. In some cases, the food provided in the pantry plays a key role in helping guests manage chronic conditions like diabetes, obesity, and high blood pressure.

When the quarantine began, the Wesley Food Pantry made a commitment to continue to be a resource for our food insecure neighbors in whatever way we had available to us. Our operations have continued weekly at both locations throughout the pandemic. As of September 2020, we operate as a drive through pantry. Guests are still allowed to choose items from a list in the drive through lane to keep some of the choice-model benefits at our distributions.