

CHICAGOLAND EXTRA Helping out

Network to feed needs

Non-profit aims to link volunteers, charities

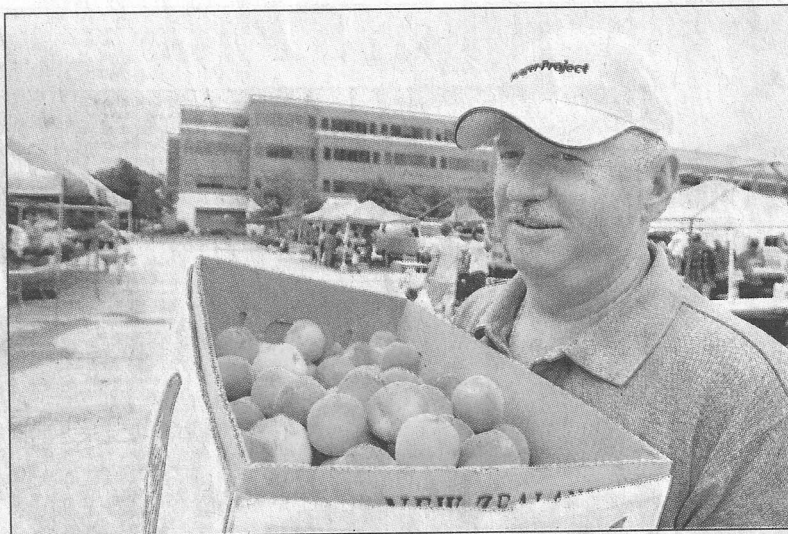
Who: Because his church's program to deliver food to soup kitchens and food pantries was so successful, Dan Jariabka, 61, of Northbrook thought a good project would be to franchise the program and get others involved.

"But we found the needs were too great—massive needs—for one little church by itself," he said.

So this spring Jariabka founded Hunger Project Illinois, a non-denominational, not-for-profit registered charity that will serve as a sort of clearinghouse partnering food and non-food businesses with soup kitchens, shelters, food pantries, organizations, churches and volunteers.

What he does: The goal is to provide "a network for them to turn to when they have a need," Jariabka said. A database is being developed with resources for shelters, pantries and food kitchens.

A soup kitchen with a critical need for produce can find a list of food partners who can help fill that



Dan Jariabka, president of Hunger Project Illinois, collects a box of fruit from an Evanston farmers market. DARRELL GOEMAAT/PHOTO FOR THE TRIBUNE

need, Jariabka said, or a shelter may be running out of toiletries and can contact a non-food partner.

A shelter may need its shower heads replaced and can find a hardware store to donate one and a plumber to donate time to install it, for example. Organizations looking for volunteers also can find people available to work, Jariabka said.

What he does in real life: Jariabka and his wife, Linda, have two children and two grandchildren. He is part-owner of Action Plastics in Bensenville and has worked as a paramedic and fire inspector with the village of Northbrook, in a funeral home and also served in the military.

Why he does it: "Through St. Giles [Episcopal Church in Northbrook], we would deliver food to Reba Place [a Christian fellowship in Evanston and Chicago] or the Evanston food pantry, and it could be 30 degrees and snowing and people are waiting in alleys for bread, produce. At 9:30 in the morning they are waiting for you to pull up," he said. "It touches you."

How you can help: The next open meeting will be at 7 p.m. Aug. 27 in St. Giles Episcopal Church, 3025 Walters Ave., Northbrook. For information, visit hungerprojectillinois.org or leave a message at 847-272-1700.

—Phyllis Benson