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Two new board members elected to the Greater Chicago Food Depository's board of directors

CHICAGO – The Greater Chicago Food Depository's board of directors recently elected two new members – Mark Parrell of Equity Residential and Rev. Manuel Dorantes of Immaculate Conception Catholic Church.

Both are committed to the Food Depository's mission to end hunger and bring unique skills to that ongoing effort. Dorantes, known to many as "Father Manny," serves as pastor at Immaculate Conception in the Brighton Park neighborhood, where he has in recent years established a new social services center that serves food to people facing hunger. Parrell, who was recently appointed to be president and CEO of Equity Residential, is a longtime supporter and volunteer for the Food Depository.

Dorantes and Parrell were elected at the Jan. 28 meeting, bringing the total number of board members to 27.

"We're thrilled to welcome Mark and Father Manny to our board of directors," said Kate Maehr, executive director and CEO for the Greater Chicago Food Depository. "The qualities they bring to the table will help us to evolve to end hunger in Chicago and throughout Cook County."

Parrell brings significant business acumen and philanthropic experience to the board. Previously, he served on the boards of directors for Brookdale Senior Living and Aviv REIT. In 2017, Mark joined the Food Depository's finance committee and has since played an active role in the committee's oversight of the organization's budget, investment policy and risk assessment.

Since last year, Parrell has also worked to strengthen Equity Residential's commitment to ending food insecurity, culminating in a company-wide volunteer event in November.

"My family and I have been supporters and volunteers at the Food Depository for many years and I am honored to join the board," Parrell said. "This organization does so much to help so many in addressing the need to end hunger in our community and I am excited to be a part of that effort."

Parrell is an excellent fit as the Food Depository evolves to meet the changing needs in the community, said Rhonna Cass, chair of the board.

"As the Food Depository looks to grow in the years ahead, Mark's expertise is both timely and fortuitous," Cass said. "We certainly appreciate his involvement and support over the years."

Dorantes brings hands-on experience in building a community. Casa Misericordia, the new social services center at Immaculate Conception, was designed with input from the Food Depository. In addition to its food pantry, which serves about 300 families per month, the center also offers afterschool meals. Last summer, Casa Misericordia served more than 4,000 meals to youth.

“I have personally witnessed the tremendous impact that the Food Depository has in our communities and in our most vulnerable families,” Dorantes said. “I feel humbled and honored for the opportunity to serve on this board and I look forward to contributing towards the strengthening of Chicago’s food bank for years to come.”

Dorantes’ first-hand experience in empowering and uplifting a community will further strengthen the Food Depository’s mission to end hunger, Cass said.

“We’re excited to see him bring that same approach to the Food Depository,” Cass said.

About the Greater Chicago Food Depository

The Greater Chicago Food Depository, Chicago’s food bank, is a nonprofit food distribution and training center providing food for hungry people while striving to end hunger in our community. The Food Depository, founded in 1979, makes a daily impact across Cook County with a network of 700 pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, mobile programs, children’s programs, older adult programs and innovative responses that address the root causes of hunger. Last year, the Food Depository distributed more than 69 million pounds of shelf-stable food, fresh produce, dairy products and meat, the equivalent of 160,000 meals every day. For more information, visit chicagosfoodbank.org or call 773-247-FOOD.

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