

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2014

The 1 in 5: Going to school, receiving food



As the sun came up on a chilly Thursday morning, Tiffany Andrews was already heading out the door with her two children. They were going to Chavez Elementary School in the Back of the Yards neighborhood to drop her 10-year-old daughter off for school. They were also at the school to get food at the Healthy Kids Market.

“This helps us out a lot,” Tiffany said. “We only have one income right now, so it’s a big deal to get extra food. Plus, it’s easy for me because I’m here already dropping my daughter off.”

The Healthy Kids Market is for families with children at the school. On that morning, it was distributing onions, green bell peppers, beets, oranges and shelf-stable food like oatmeal and canned vegetables.

“Fruit is really pricey these days,” Tiffany said. “Getting it here helps us save money for other living expenses.”

Tiffany’s husband works full-time in a nearby warehouse. She had a steady job as a receptionist since 2006, but recently became unemployed. She is actively looking for a job, but with only one income, providing food for her children can be difficult.

“We try to focus as best we can on nutritious food,” she said. “They love bananas and pears and all that, but it’s not easy to always provide those.”

Tiffany’s family is one of many in the neighborhood who turn to the program for food occasionally. Mayra Sedano, a volunteer with a son and daughter at the school, sees the benefit of the Market.

“There are a lot of kids here who rely on the fruit and vegetables they get here. When families run out, they can’t really afford to buy more,” she said.

Mayra receives food as well.

“My daughter is diabetic and she needs to eat healthy, so I can stretch what we get here into meals for the week,” she said.

The Market at Chavez, one of 10 Healthy Kids Markets in Chicago Public Schools, serves approximately 700 households per month.

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