



RICHI Service Event at Pilsen Food Pantry

On Friday, August 22, together with RICHI Co-Chair Dr. Minal Giri, ICAAP RICHI project manager Abby Creek, and new-to-Chicago pediatrician Dr. Hayley Sparks, I spent 3 hours volunteering at the Pilsen Food Pantry. We chose a service activity as our August event to give ourselves an opportunity to come together in person, since so many of our meetings are virtual. We also hoped that providing direct service might counteract some of the feelings of frustration and concern that many of our recent RICHI topics bring out!

We can argue that our work as pediatricians IS direct service, and indeed it is...but somehow working with another service organization to put food into the hands of people there to ask for it felt satisfyingly different. Most of the time my job was to add fresh milk or frozen fish, chicken, or strawberries to the cart according to the request on the checklist submitted by the client. I also had the chance to deliver several of the 80+ carts we filled full of requested groceries to the person waiting outside. The heartfelt thanks offered to me in multiple languages by people of varied ages, genders, and ethnicities provided a great reminder of how fabulous it feels to address concretely a social determinant of health that is beyond what I can affect in clinic.

We also gathered to review planning for the remainder of our monthly RICHI gatherings, and to start thinking about topics and events for 2026. Please let us know if you have thoughts or suggestions about topics, or even other service events. We hope to connect with you at another RICHI event soon.

Sue Haverkamp
RICHI co-chair