

Anawim Place Food Bank and the Sisters of Providence

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The Sisters of Providence have been working in Inner City Edmonton for almost 50 years. Some of these dedicated women belong to the Parish of the Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples and serve wherever the need calls them, such as Anawim Place Food Bank. Anawim Place Food Bank, owned and operated by the Sisters of Providence, is a service that provides food baskets to those in need, two days a week. Over the years the need for this service has grown significantly. So, along with the Sisters, a group of faithful volunteers from across the city are pleased to be there to prepare the baskets, keep the facility clean, and serve the people with a smile, compassion, and care.

Most of the food available for distribution comes from Edmonton's Food Bank each week. This is supplemented at times by donations from various churches, individuals, and the Sisters of Providence themselves who also undertake food drives when the opportunity arises.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, Anawim Place Food Bank had to close its doors due to the concern of spreading the virus, as we could not assure the safety of our clients. However, even this has a silver lining. During these weeks we have undertaken a renovation project at Anawim Place to make the atmosphere more welcoming, safe, and attractive for our clients. This has been a time of blessing as we see the newly created space emerging for those who come for assistance.

Sister Estela Andaya, SP, received a letter from the Main Food Bank speaking of the good work being done at Anawim Place Food Bank. It is a very needed work and much appreciated by so many in our City. This work has been running non-stop for many years now in the same little building downtown. During the beginning of the pandemic, when we had to close for a while, the Main Food Bank invested a significant amount of capital in renovating and improving the place for the well-being of the people in need. This shows the confidence that they have in Sister Estela and the volunteers who show up every day to serve!

Collen Chapman, the coordinator of Boyle McCauley News in Edmonton added: "Sister Estela, Father Jim, and their wonderful, dedicated volunteers greet people and process their

food orders. By the time a client has seen the third person in the process, their order is ready and they can leave with their food.”

Poverty has always been a serious issue in our city as families and individuals struggle to make ends meet in this climate where work is scarce and funds even scarcer. Anawim Place and the Sisters are pleased to be able to do their parts to make a small difference in people’s lives.

By Sister Estela Andaya, SP and Rev. James (Jim) L. Holland.