

NAPERVILLE SUN

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Building purchase to help Loaves & Fishes expand CARES programs



Mike Havala, president & CEO of Loaves & Fishes and Mary Boulos, assistant vice president CARES Programs, stand in front of the agency's new building at 1879 High Grove Lane in Naperville. (Loaves & Fishes)

By **MARIE WILSON** | For the Naperville Sun

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The building next to Loaves & Fishes Community Services' Naperville Market soon will be the home of its CARES programs, which help clients with a range of needs beyond filling the fridge.

The nonprofit has purchased the building at 1879 High Grove Lane and plans to transform the 10,000-square-foot office building into a central location at which clients can meet in private with Loaves & Fishes staffers, attend classes on topics to help build self-sufficiency, and stop by for health screenings and vaccines.

Some of the building will be available for Loaves & Fishes use as early as this month, while other portions will open and transition to CARES program spaces by 2027, President and CEO Mike Havala said.

The benefits of the new building for the human services organization are many, Havala said in a phone interview.



"Having additional space for our CARES programs will help us serve more clients. It also will provide more private spaces to meet with clients and do consultations and so fourth," he said. "We'll have more space for programs, classes, meeting with people in the community in bigger groups. We'll have more parking as a result of that property as well, which will help take a little pressure off the parking that we have at the market."

The nonprofit is not disclosing the price of the building, but the purchase comes as part of Loaves & Fishes' \$15 million Nourish Together campaign, which also is funding the expansion of the organization's Aurora Food Distribution Hub. Construction is underway on the 32,000-square-foot addition to increase food storage capacity.

The need for food assistance and the other support provided by Loaves & Fishes CARES — such as emergency financial assistance, English classes, job support, public benefits assistance, tax preparation and a program that provides a car to help with transportation issues — remains steady or rising, Havala said.

Loaves & Fishes typically serves about 10,000 people each week across DuPage, Kane, Kendall and Will counties, according to a news release. In its 2026 fiscal year, it distributed nearly \$845,000 in emergency assistance and saw a 56.5% increase in client participation in health screenings and vaccine clinics.

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“The client cases are tending to be more multifaceted with more complex needs as well,” Havala said.

That’s why the building next door to the longtime food market at 1871 High Grove Lane is such a positive acquisition, he said. Fundraising continues to help both the Aurora Food Distribution Hub addition and the CARES program expansion in Naperville move forward.

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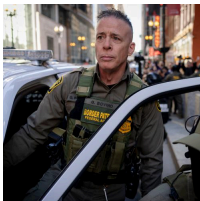
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“By expanding our capacity for both healthy food and wraparound support,” Havala said in a news release, “we can help more people move from hunger toward stability and, ultimately, toward thriving.”

Marie Wilson is a freelance reporter for the Naperville Sun.

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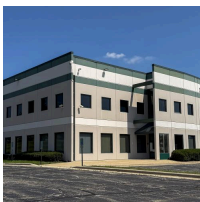
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