

2019 Woman of Power



[Cathy Ferrel](#) moved to Aurora in 1997, during her 40 year career in financial sales with Fortune 100 companies. She volunteered in Indian Prairie School District 204 in many capacities such as Parent Teachers Association, the district wide Indian Prairie Parent's Council (IPPC) group, and assisting in the referendum to build Metea High School.

Cathy resides in the East side of Aurora and has 2 grown children, Kelly age 27 and Daniel age 25. In 2004 Cathy was awarded 'Volunteer of the Year' by the City of Aurora through the Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois Council.

Seven years ago, Cathy started a Community Service Committee in her East Side Aurora neighborhood. This is where she learned about the Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry and the legacy of Marie Wilkinson. She couldn't ignore the stories of Marie's hard work and relentless dedication to help others.

Cathy truly believes that Marie is constantly looking over her shoulder, keeping her motivated and encouraged to do good work throughout Aurora and Fox Valley area. Along with dedicated volunteers and the guidance of pantry director Diane Renner, she helped relocate Marie's East Side pantry into it's new location at East Aurora High School. Cathy works directly with staff and social workers to assist students with any special hunger needs, educating them about general services which help nourish the community. This partnership at the high school and district has been beneficial to everyone involved.

Cathy provides direction and support to over 100 volunteers that help keep pantry programs running each month. She's a 'hands on' leader, and look out - she knows how to sling boxes, and operates a forklift and pallet jack like nobody's business! Pantry guests soon become 'friends and family', as Cathy is always ready to lend an ear and provide compassionate, practical support to anyone in need.

In addition to dedicating her time and energy to help build new food pantry programs, Cathy has been active with other non-profits in the area such as the Fox Valley Marines, Vets Week, the Neighbor Project, East Aurora Educational Foundation, the Aurora Kiwanis Club and downtown Aurora parades. If you ask her for assistance, she will eagerly dedicate her time and energies to help causes that she's passionate about.