

## **Panera Cares cafe opens in Chicago**

***The new unit is the fourth pay-what-you-can cafe opened by The Panera Bread Foundation***

By Ron Ruggless, June 21, 2012

The Panera Bread Foundation opened its fourth pay-what-you-can Panera Cares café on Thursday in Chicago.

The nonprofit foundation, which first launched Panera Cares in May 2010 in Clayton, Mo., has other locations in Dearborn, Mich., and Portland, Ore.

"It is a combination of the generosity of Chicagoans and the community needs that make the city ideal for our newest Panera Cares café," Ron Shaich, founder, chairman and co-chief executive of St. Louis, Mo.-based Panera Bread Co., said in a statement.



"Opening a new Panera Cares community café brings the Panera experience with dignity to all — those who can afford it, those who need a hand up, and everyone in between," Shaich explained.

The foundation said the new Panera Cares, in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood, "is easily accessible via public transportation and expects to attract an eclectic mix of economically diverse customers."

Panera Cares units do not display prices or have cash registers, relying on only donation levels and donation bins. The units also offer a volunteer program for those without the money to donate for a meal.

"It's important that we find ways for the community to support our Panera Cares café, even if someone is unable to do so monetarily," Shaich said. "That's the purpose of our volunteer program. A customer can help out around the café for one hour and receive a meal voucher at the end of that hour. It's a way to add to the dignity of the experience while still encouraging people to contribute to our mission through their time."

The Chicago location also plans to add more programs, such as a job-training program for at-risk youth, the company said.

"The vision for the Panera Cares café is to use Panera's unique restaurant skills to address real societal needs and make a direct impact in communities," said Shaich, who also serves as president of the Panera Cares Foundation.

The publically traded Panera Bread Co. operates more than 1,560 restaurants under the Panera Bread, St. Louis Bread Co. and Paradise Bakery & Café brands.