

Soup Scoop

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The mission of the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen is to feed the hungry of our community regardless of race, religion, or ethnicity. We welcome all volunteers to this service who share an unconditional positive regard for every human being. We provide a safe, respectful, and inviting environment in an atmosphere of hope and dignity.

Daily Bread is an entirely volunteer-run organization. Founded in 2009, Daily Bread serves a hot nutritious lunch seven days a week at 116 N. First Street, Champaign. Lunches are served from 11:00 to 12:30 pm to anyone who walks through our doors.

"It costs money just to sit on Santa's lap."

Charles Dickens began *A Tale of Two Cities* with the words, "It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." He could have been referring to Christmas.

Christmas, for many of us, is the best of times, a holly, jolly, magical time. It's Christmas trees and wreaths on the front door, brightly wrapped packages and stockings hung by a fireplace. It's the smells of baking cookies and roasting turkeys. It's mailboxes stuffed with holiday cards. It's families, laughing together. It's children whispering their wishes to Santa.

But Christmas, for many of our soup kitchen guests, is the worst of times. After the bills are paid, there's no money left over for all the trimmings of Christmas. Many of our guests don't even have a front door to hang a wreath. Christmas trees cost money, as do stockings and Christmas cards. Presents cost money, as does wrapping paper. Baking cookies and roasting turkeys cost money. Many of our guests are estranged from their families, so there's no family dinner. Any child can sit on Santa's lap at the mall, but sweet pictures of the event cost money. And most guests know they won't be able to make their child's wishes come true.



At Daily Bread we do what we can to help our guests experience the best of Christmas. We decorate our dining room and play Christmas carols. We add Christmas cookies to our dessert table. We hand out small presents to the children we feed. We take pictures of guests by a Christmas tree, and we give them stamped Christmas cards. We pass out filled backpacks as a Christmas gift. We even invite Santa to our Backpack Giveaway!

It's not a lot. It doesn't take away the sadness that many of our guests feel during the holidays. But it's something.

At the end of Dickens' classic story, *A Christmas Carol*, a reformed Ebenezer Scrooge announces at the dinner table, "I will honour Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year." Today, we are asking you to remember the guests at Daily Bread and to honor the season by making a donation to the soup kitchen. It was said of Scrooge that, "...he learned how to keep Christmas well." May that be truly said of all of us this holiday season.

“We Honor the Season When We Open Our Hearts”

It's backpack time again at Daily Bread, and we hope that many of you take this opportunity to provide a bit of Christmas to one of our guests. We will celebrate the holidays by giving filled backpacks to the men and women we see at lunch. The men and women we see daily are rarely remembered at Christmas. For many, these backpacks will be their only presents.

Backpacks will be given away on **Friday, December 14**, beginning at 10:00 am. Last year we gave away over 800 backpacks.



Backpacks should be stuffed with toiletries such as deodorant, hand lotion for hands chapped by the cold, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, shaving cream, etc. Cold weather items such as gloves, hats, scarves, socks, sweatshirts, tee shirts, long underwear, and regular underwear are especially appreciated. Other items could include hand warmers, cough drops, books, decks of cards, small fleece blankets, candy, gum, and food items. Since the backpacks are a Christmas gift, backpacks and all items should be **new**.

In the past we have found used clothes in packs, which we donate to Goodwill. Once we even found a bowling ball in a bowling bag that looked like a backpack! Fortunately, we were suspicious of the weight of the pack, so we were able to return the bag to its owner before a surprised guest was the unhappy recipient of a bowling ball rather than some warm socks!

All backpacks should be labeled with the gender and size of the recipient (i.e. Man-XL). Most of our guests request at least a size Large, most preferred XL. There is also a need for some 2X and 3X bags. We do NOT give out children's backpacks.

Filled backpacks can be dropped off **Monday, Dec. 3 through Thursday, Dec. 13**. Backpacks can be dropped off at the back door at Daily Bread, 116 N. First Street, Champaign from 9-12 P.M. Tax forms will be available.

Backpacks can also be dropped off at Ellen Harms' (705 S. Elm Blvd. 356-2551) at Pam Hagle's (713 S. Elm Blvd., 359-3245) or at Ruthann Evans' (4414 Crossgate Dr. 398-5687). We are also happy to accept empty backpacks and items to fill backpacks.

If you have any questions, please contact Ellen at 356-2551 or ellenharms@aol.com.

Up-Coming Events

1. Triptych Brewing is sponsoring Bowling for Soup on Sunday, December 9 from 12pm-5 pm at Old Orchard Lanes. Check out Triptych's Bowling for Soup 2018 on Facebook.
2. Rotary West is hosting CU's Got Talent fundraiser on February 2 with DBSK as one of the organizations receiving support. For more information go to cugottalent.org.
3. Empty Bowls will celebrate their 10th anniversary in April with all donations going to Daily Bread. More information will be in the spring newsletter.

Meet Our Hard-Working Crew Chiefs

Clare Haussermann, a Champaign townie and former high school teacher, is our Monday crew chief. She is also a second generation DBSK volunteer! *"I began volunteering at DBSK 19 years ago this month. My mother had volunteered at the soup kitchen when it was St. Jude's Catholic Worker House. I knew that I would follow in her footsteps someday.*



First and foremost, the Monday crew is 'responsible.' Our faithful crew members have assumed particular jobs: cooking, serving, washing dishes, scraping, etc., and they execute them with competence, grace, and style each week. Our crew is congenial, hard working, able to improvise, fun to be with, intelligent, kind to our guests, and accomplished. I could go on, but I'm afraid other crew chiefs might try to steal my volunteers away!

Monday doesn't have a signature dish, but guests seem to enjoy our meatloaf, pasta with meat sauce, BBQ pork or beef and roasted potatoes.

Monday volunteers are committed to helping people who live in our community."

Charlie Evans, retired University administrator, heads the Tuesday Crew. *"I started at DBSK five years ago when my wife 'suggested' that I come down at the end of the day to put up chairs. I would describe our Tuesday crew as 'sensitive' because they are all sensitive to the needs of our guests. The crew's slogan is "Any Opportunity to Celebrate!" because Tuesday volunteers are always looking for ways to make Tuesday special and fun. Thanks to El Toro's generous donation of a taco meal, we celebrate Taco Tuesday once a month with a special song. We offer guests two desserts on Fat Tuesday, hand out candy at Halloween, decorate tables with flowers, and dress up in red for Valentine's Day and Christmas.*



Tuesday is known for our soups (thanks to soup guru, retired math teacher Kathleen Smith, who once made delicious soup out of Bloody Mary mix!) and our colorful tossed salads, (thanks to John Neff and Tony Peressini). But it's meatloaf where we really shine! One guest made us promise we wouldn't tell his mother that our meatloaf was better than hers.

We have volunteers who 'go the extra mile' for our guests. Our volunteers on the serving line offer cheerful responses to requests for 'more gravy' or an 'extra dessert,' and the folks at the front desk often bring in a pair of gloves or hat for a needy guest." Our Tuesday crew are folks who like people and like to have fun.

Bob Goss, a former 26-year military vet, 17-year administrator at Krannert and current DBSK Board President, is the Wednesday crew chief (editor's note: Bob's military background stands him in good stead when it comes to keeping the Wednesday crew, Wednesday's guests, and the DBSK board members in line!). *"Twenty two years ago I had just moved to Champaign where I walked down the street, found St. Jude's Catholic Worker House, met Ellen McDowell, and was committed. I still am!*



I would have to describe the Wednesday crew as ‘fun-loving.’ This is exemplified by the dance parties we have in the dishwashing area every Wednesday! It takes special volunteers to make dishwashing fun. I’m pretty sure that we are the only crew who has volunteers who do interpretive dancing! This probably explains why our slogan is ‘We’re the Best.’

We pride ourselves in the kitchen for two things: Andy’s soups and our creative use of leftovers and donated food. We are delighted to get food once a month from Piato’s Catering. On the other days we are proud of how we cook greens. Another favorite dish is Sloppy Henry’s (only Henry has the recipe!).

Wednesday is also Assistance Day at DBSK, the day that guests can sign up for bus passes, state ID’s, and birth certificates.

Recently we were notified just as we were getting ready to serve, that the city was turning off the water because of repairs to a water line. We were able to convince the water company to delay the shut off until after lunch was served. Another descriptive word— ‘Resourceful.’

I think that volunteers come to the Wednesday crew out of a desire to be of service. But they stay because of the camaraderie that we share with fellow volunteers and our guests.”

Ruth Branaman, retired Assistant Manager in Food Service at the University of Illinois, is Thursday's Crew Chief. *“I started as a cook at St. Jude Catholic Worker House in 2000, two months after I retired. I would describe the Thursday crew as ‘amiable and cooperative. No one ever says ‘no’ to anything they are asked to do. (Editor’s note: Other crews describe Thursday as ‘organized and efficient.’ They are the only crew that gets the dishes done and the kitchen cleaned by 1:00 pm.)*

Thursday’s signature meal is ham and beans with homemade corn bread. We are lucky to have Arby’s donate BBQ beef once a month, and The Ribeye donates chicken and baked potatoes once a month. A couple of years ago there was a mix-up and Arby’s didn’t show up. Our emergency backup is hot dogs but there was not a single hot dog in the place. A land speed record to the grocery store—and we were serving hot dogs and beans by 11:05!

I think that our volunteers are drawn to DBSK because they are all good people who feel called to ‘DO SOMETHING.’ The camaraderie keeps them together and coming back. As for me, I don’t have a lot of money to give away, so I give my time.”

Zarina Hock, a retired Senior Editor from the National Council of Teachers of English, is the Friday Crew Chief. *“I was born in Lucknow, India, to a North Indian family. I attended a ‘convent school’ run by Irish nuns, where I was required to learn to cook. (I still dread shepherd’s pie!). I came to the US for graduate studies, where I met my husband, a U of I professor, and never left. When I retired in 2007, a friend suggested I join her in volunteering.*

Friday’s volunteers can be described as ‘diverse,’ a diverse group who enjoy sharing food traditions from around the world— how to cook okra without letting it get slimy, how to slice a mango, and, of course, how to blend exotic spices. Our volunteers have raised awareness of vegetarian cuisine and



regularly offer a main dish seasoned with Indian and other spices, something that many of our guests have come to enjoy and expect.

I was drawn to DBSK in part because I'm still haunted by the poverty that one cannot help but see in India. So volunteering at DBSK was my opportunity to make up for that."

Jeff Carns, a U of I accountant, is the Saturday crew chief. *"I've been working at Daily Bread for 21.5 years. A friend from church was the Saturday crew chief and asked me to come one Saturday when she was short-handed. I did; I came back, and a couple of weeks later she told me that she had an internship so I would be in charge! I've been crew chief ever since.*

I would describe Saturday's crew as 'ever-changing.' We have many student volunteers who bring with them energy and enthusiasm but who tend to come and go. When we moved to New Covenant and stopped serving a hot meal on the weekend, we began serving sack lunches and hot soup out of a van and added more local volunteers. Now we're happy to be back to serving hot meals.

Saturday prides itself for using up leftovers. We love it when we can serve food that isn't easy to use, which often leads to interesting casseroles and soups. One summer we got lots of bags of small bacon pieces, and we served 'bacon potato' soup for weeks. The soup was so good that my crew and I took home leftovers. (Public health won't let us serve soup that has been used.) I ate so much soup that at my annual physical, my cholesterol had gone up.

Our motto probably is 'Saturday Soup Kitchen-Where Everybody has fun but Jeff.' I try very hard to make student volunteers feel like they are accomplishing something and are needed. I hope that when students leave CU that they seek out other volunteer opportunities.

As for me, I actually do have fun and enjoy what I do. But I've personally seen the effects of addiction and mental illness. When I'm interacting with our guests, I often think of that old expression, 'There, but for the grace of God, go I.'"



Alexander Breen, University of Illinois Food Engineering grad, heads the Sunday Crew. *"In Spring 2000 at Ash Wednesday services at St. John's on campus, Monsignor Swetland gave a great sermon that convinced me that I needed to better give of my time, treasure, and talent during Lent. He mentioned St. Jude Catholic Worker House. I started that first Saturday of Lent and have continued ever since. The Sunday Crew is a mix of dedicated local citizens and university students. We tend to be a bit short of volunteers during exam periods. But I like to think that we are a smooth operating machine!*

We try to create a meal from what needs to be used up! I go in to DBSK Friday night to see what's available and then put my menu together. I like to see what fresh food is available before deciding what to cook. We have a cook who makes an awesome Mac and Cheese. We also do a lot of oven fries which guests really like. Brined pork chops are always a hit.

I think that our volunteers are drawn to service at Daily Bread through a desire to make a difference in our community."



Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, Inc.
P.O. Box 648
Champaign, IL 61824-0648



God loveth a cheerful giver
(2 Corinthians 9:7),
But Daily Bread is also happy
To accepteth from a grouch!

Cash donations very gratefully accepted
at:

Daily Bread Soup Kitchen
P.O. Box 648 Champaign, IL 61824-
0648

or

www.dailybreadsoupkitchen.com

Happy Holidays from Daily Bread!!!