



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. Due to COVID, take-out lunches are served from 10:30 to 12:30 pm through the front door.

“Christmas Don’t Mean Much If the Only Thing You Find in Your Sock is a Hole...”

Christmas is not an easy time for our guests at the Soup Kitchen. Many of the things that make the holidays special are hard to come by if you are living on the streets or with a very tight budget. There’s no big wreath if you don’t have a front door to hang it on. There’s no brightly decorated Christmas tree if you don’t have a front room to stand it in. There are no Christmas lights if you are struggling to pay the power bill. It takes an oven to bake Christmas cookies, and even sprinkles have gotten expensive. By the end of the month there’s not much money left to buy the fixings for a Christmas dinner or presents for your kids. If you’re alone or estranged from your family, there’s no one to share a Christmas meal. Hallmark movies, if you’re fortunate enough to have a tv, always have happy endings. Even the Grinch and Scrooge end up surrounded by friends and sharing a festive dinner. The beauty of snow-covered streets isn’t so beautiful if you don’t have boots and your socks have holes. Perry Como may sing that ‘There’s no place like home for the holidays,’ but if you don’t have a car or a bus ticket, there’s no way for you to get there.

Actually, we had hoped that we could provide a bit of Christmas cheer to our guests this year and invite them to come home to Daily Bread this Christmas. We hoped that we would be able to celebrate Christmas **INSIDE** in our dining room once again, after two years of serving a Christmas feast in a clamshell through the front door because of Covid. We are still hopeful that we might be able to open our doors this December. We are closely watching the Covid-19 Community Level of Transmission for Champaign County. Plans are in place for reopening. For the safety of both our guests and our volunteers, we are waiting for the level to drop to low. Being able to spend Christmas inside with our guests would be the best Christmas present for our dedicated Daily Bread volunteers!



“The Gift of Food to the Hungry is the Noblest of All Gifts.”

At Daily Bread we do what we can to make Christmas special for the guests who we see every day. We prepare a delicious Christmas Eve feast. We bake Christmas cookies for dessert. We pass out candy canes. We give our guests stamped Christmas cards to send to faraway relatives. We pass out knapsacks generously filled with cold weather gear and toiletries. (You will find more details later in this newsletter!) We play Christmas music and decorate our dining room with Christmas trees.

What makes all this possible? What makes it possible for us to serve a hot meal every day, seven days a week, to well over 300 guests is our generous community. Our mission of feeding the hungry in Champaign-Urbana is supported every day by the checks that arrive in the mail and the generous gifts that we receive from local individuals and businesses. Every day we are grateful for the gifts that show up at our back door. We are grateful for the generous hearts of those of you who support the Soup Kitchen.

People often ask us if we have to buy all the food we serve. Our grocery bill is definitely large, but much of the food we serve is donated, gifted to us with love.



Eastern Illinois Foodbank is our biggest provider of food. Last fiscal year we received 95,959 pounds of food, including 21,885 pounds of fresh produce from the foodbank. Some we pay a small fee for; much is free. Every weekday, volunteers shop at the foodbank for fresh produce, breads, desserts, and other perishable items. Another volunteer orders food from the daily list that includes non-perishables such as canned goods, dried goods, chips, crackers, etc.

We also do a daily pickup at **Gordon Food Service** for donations of produce and other items. We do much of our shopping at **GFS** as well, with a

large weekly delivery every Wednesday.

Many of our guests, especially mothers of young children, come to the Soup Kitchen because they can't afford fresh fruits and veggies on a limited food budget. A volunteer for the weekend picks up donations every Friday night from **Common Ground Food Coop**. The Saturday and Sunday crew are particularly good at finding tasty ways of preparing the fresh vegetables they pick up.

We are especially lucky throughout the summer to have the back doorbell ring and find a **local gardener or farmer** with boxes of extra produce. Tomatoes, squash, green beans, apples, cucumbers, we are delighted to have it all. **Champaign County Master Gardeners** have supported DBSK through their participation in the Give Back Garden.

Their cabbages, sweet and hot peppers, eggplants, and other veggies have found their way into delicious recipes we served this summer.

Our guests are delighted to get fresh fruit with their meals.

Volunteer LaDonna brings two boxes of bananas every Sunday.

Crew chief Alex estimates that there are about 100 bananas per box, so I calculate that LaDonna donates around 10,400 bananas each

year. LaDonna has been donating bananas for years! That's a lot of happy banana-eating guests!





Obviously, when you are serving 300-400 hot meals a day, you need a lot of meat. Meat, both for meals and for sandwiches in the sack lunches that we give to all guests, is the largest part of our grocery bill. We are fortunate that we receive donations of meat from a variety of sources. **Chic-Fil-**



A has provided lots of chicken that our talented cooks turn into delicious casseroles and other dishes. **Black Dog Smoke and Ale House** donates ribs, salmon, and catfish on a regular basis. Both restaurants also give us delicious sides and biscuits.



Once a month **our friends from Forrest/Fairbury** show up with coolers full of ground pork, pork chops, and ribs, along with a trailer full of other food items. It feels like Christmas when they arrive because we never know exactly what is going to be in their trailer.

For the last several years **Dr. Karl Radnitzer**, a hobby farmer, has donated a hog to Daily Bread. Sadly, while we were

able to get a picture of Dr. Radnitzer, we were unable to get a picture of the pig! We also get a yearly donation of a cow that shows up at DBSK as hamburger from **Dr. David Bane**, a local veterinarian. Sadly, we have no picture of either Dr. Bane or the cow!



We also get a plethora of already prepared entrees. The third Tuesday of the month is a favorite with guests because it's Taco Tuesday, with a complete Mexican meal donated by **El Toro**. The third Wednesday of the month is a favorite of guests because the entire meal is provided by **Piato Catering**, and the meal is always something different. Piato is also providing all the sides for our upcoming Thanksgiving feast.



Every hot meal is served with a dessert, and we add a sweet to every sack lunch as well. That comes out to LOTS of desserts every day, but thanks to many businesses, our dessert refrigerators tend to stay full. We get delicious desserts, breads, and rolls from the foodbank on a daily basis. Daily Bread gets a wealth of donations of bread and desserts from **Panera**, **Hopscotch Bakery**, **Ye Olde Donut Shoppe**, and **Espresso Royale**. We pick up more baked goods from local Grocery stores like **Schnucks** and **Harvest Market**.



It's hard to believe but people order pizza from **Papa Del's** and then don't pick it up. Their loss, our gain, because **Papa Del's** freezes those pizzas and donates them to us. We always have happy guests when pizza shows up in the clamshells. **Michael's Catering** and other catering businesses frequently stop by with pans of delicious, prepared meals. **University of Illinois Housing** contacts us when they have leftover entrees, and our food crew picks up the pans of food. Don't let anyone tell you that college students don't eat well! We've even gotten leftovers from events at the President's House!

We are grateful that so much excess food is not being thrown away in Champaign, Urbana. Rather, it is being made available to us to feed the hungry of our community.

Well done, Champaign-Urbana!!

“Christmas is not So Much About Opening Presents as Opening our Hearts.”



Once again, we will be giving out knapsacks filled with toiletries and cold weather gear to our guests in mid-December. We are asking for your help to fill the knapsacks. We are looking for donations of deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, shaving cream, razors, hand lotion for hands chapped by the cold, hand warmers, Chapstick, gloves, hats, socks, and scarves, as well as a small treat. Because these knapsacks will be gifts for our guests, we ask that all items be **NEW**.

Donations can be dropped off at the back door of the Soup Kitchen (116 North First Street,

Champaign) between 9-12:30. Items can also be dropped off at Ellen Harms' (705 South Elm Blvd, 217-356-2551), at Pam Hagle's (713 South Elm Blvd, 217-898-5500), or at Ruth Ann Evans' (4414 Crossgate Drive, 217-398-5687).

We also will have empty knapsacks available for individuals and groups who would like to personally fill the knapsacks. Please contact Ellen, Pam, or Ruth Ann to get knapsacks to fill. All donations and filled knapsacks need to be received by **Friday, December 10**. For more information, check our website dailybreadsoupkitchen.com.

We are extremely grateful to all of you who open your hearts to help fill our knapsacks and bring some of the joy and magic of the season to our guests at the Soup Kitchen.

“The Greatest Gift in Life is to be Remembered.”



The average age of the volunteers at Daily Bread skews a bit older, in fact quite a bit older. That is a blessing in many ways because we have a volunteer force rich in talent, life experience, life skills, and free time. But the down side is that we too frequently have to say good-bye to volunteers who have devoted time and hearts to our shared mission. This year we lost two of the best, Dick Bennett and Andy Sofranko, both longtime volunteers, DBSK Board members, and incredible contributors.

Andy was famous for the incredible soups he created every Wednesday. Andy could make soup out of anything, and they were all delicious.



Sadly, none of Andy's recipes remain, because he cooked by trial and error: a bit of this, a bit of that, more salt, a pinch of cumin, etc. Impossible to resist, but impossible to duplicate!

Dick took on the huge job of official Daily Bread food procurer. It was because of Dick that Andy could find all sorts of food items in our freezers and refrigerators to use for his creative soups. While most of our volunteers work one day and then take the rest of the week off, Dick was always on call. He drove all over Champaign picking up food items whenever someone called with a donation. Lifting heavy boxes, organizing storage areas, he did it all—and he did it all with a huge smile!

Andy and Dick will be long remembered at Daily Bread.

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



***“Mankind is a great, an immense family.
This is proved by what we feel in our hearts at Christmas.”
Pope John XXIII***