

# Soup Scoop 56

## April, 2026

*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.

### **“It Takes a Village to Run a Soup Kitchen!”**

Daily Bread Soup Kitchen has been operating since 2009, first out of New Covenant Fellowship and since 2015, in our own building at 116 N. First Street. Many of our volunteers also volunteered at the Catholic Worker House soup kitchen on South Randolph St.

Today, Daily Bread Soup Kitchen serves over 400 hot meals a day, seven days a week. We begin cooking around 7:00 am and serve a hot, nutritious meal from 10:30 -12:15. We also hand out 350+ sack lunches for guests to take home for an evening meal. So far, in 2026, we've served 75,093 hot and take-home meals, and we served a grand total of 341,768 meals in 2025. Some guests get their meals through our take-out window. Other guests eat their meals in our spacious dining room.

Daily Bread Soup Kitchen feeds everyone who comes through our door or shows up at our window. We ask no questions. We don't ask to see any identification or documentation of need. No one has to prove that they are hungry, that they need a meal. We keep no records of guests' names, addresses, employment, etc. Everyone is welcome at our tables.

How do we do this? Well....

### **It Takes a Village of Devoted Volunteers to Staff a Soup Kitchen**

Preparing and serving 400+ hot meals a day, 362 days a year, is an arduous task. Making almost that many ham or turkey or peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for sack lunches every day is quite an undertaking. Daily Bread is blessed to have a crew of over 200 hardy, hard-working, and devoted volunteers who take on the jobs of feeding the hungry of our community with cheerful smiles.

Our volunteers are a mixed crew. Younger and older, although many older than younger, given that we serve every weekday when younger individuals are most often at work. Our weekend volunteers are often University student volunteers who help lower our average age. We are a hodge-podge of genders, backgrounds, ethnicities, races, religions, politics. We have accountants, teachers, doctors,

professors, writers, artists, builders, social workers. We are skilled enough that we rarely have to pay anyone for services, (other



than heavy cleaning, given that we do tend toward the older side!). Many of our volunteers have been with us for years. All are committed to our mission of feeding the hungry of CU.

## It Takes a Village of Generous Donors to Fund a Soup Kitchen

Providing around 25,000 hot meals and sack lunches a month is not cheap. Fortunately, we live in an incredibly generous community! We get no government funding. Instead, we are funded entirely by individual donations from local residents, by donations from local organizations, and from a few local grants. In 2025 we had a total of 1,133 individual donors. Donations come in through checks, through the United Way Fund Drive, through PayPal online donations, through payroll deductions.

Donations sometimes are in the hundreds or thousands of dollars, but many are much less. Ellen McDowell, founder and moral compass for Daily Bread, used to say that donations from small donors are just as important as large donations, that all donations are made with love. Every dollar is appreciated. Every dollar allows us to continue to feed the hungry of our community.

Donations also come in from a wide range of local organizations. Every year we get a grant from United Way that helps support our Assistance Program. Both the CU Potters Club and the St. Thomas More Art Department sponsored Empty Bowls Fund Raisers that helped us fill our own empty bowls. In January Common Ground Food Co-op chose Daily Bread as their recipient of the Round-up program. Crop Walk walkers walked their way to a generous donation to DBSK. Many churches support our mission by holding special offerings. Little children have held lemonade stands and sent us their proceeds. Every bit helps! Every dollar is appreciated.



It's always fun when a group shows up with a check! President Bob was delighted to accept a check from the Illinois Association of Home and Community Education, Savoy Chapter (left).

He was also happy to accept a check from the CU Department of Public Health (right)—and even happier that this visit from Public Health wasn't an inspection!



Karen and Scott were happy to accept a check from Hickory Point Bank and local banker Steve Tock (left).

Ellen and Johanna were very happy to learn that the newest coffee shop on campus Dutch Brothers chose Daily Bread for their annual Day of Giving to donate one dollar for every cup of coffee served (right).



They were delighted later to learn that 1,133 cups of coffee were served on the Day of Giving! Way to go, CU Coffee Drinkers!

# It Takes a Village of Generous Businesses to Stock a Soup Kitchen

It's thanks to our many donors that we are able to stay solvent and pay our bills. It's thanks to the many, many businesses and individuals who generously donate food that we are able to provide so many delicious, nutritious meals in a budget-friendly way. ( We are also grateful to the many individual gardeners who stop by with fresh produce all summer long.) The good news is that food is not going to waste in our community, and the better news is that food is either dropped off at our back door or we get a call and come and collect it. Win-win for all, especially our guests!



Chick-fil-A



Ye Olde Donut Shoppe



Panera Bread



Piato's Catering



El Toro Restaurant



Pepperidge Farm Bread



St. Pat's Daughters of Christ



Mahomet Christian Church



St. Matthew Fish Fry

## ...and More Generous Businesses



Eastern Illinois Food Bank



Costco



Black Dog Smoke & Ale House



Harvest Market



Gordon Food Service



Common Ground Food Co-op



Forrest/Fairbury Friends



Papa Del's Pizza



Dish Passionate Cuisine

## It Takes a Village to Celebrate at a Soup Kitchen

At Daily Bread we try to do more than just hand out a hot nutritious meal. We also like to bring some smiles to the faces of our guests. There were lots of smiles in December when we once again handed out around 880 very generously filled knapsacks to our guests. The knapsacks contained toiletries, cold weather items like socks, hats, gloves, and scarves, and a bag of Christmas candy. Thanks to the many generous donors who provided the items, many men, women, and children were remembered at Christmas! Guests appreciated the items this unusually cold winter.

The Knapsack Giveaway wasn't the only celebration at Daily Bread. Joe McDaniel and the Back Porch Boys entertained our guests with a Christmas concert. A guest brought his guitar and brightened up a dreary March day.



And our guests were delighted to find Kelly Finley, WCIA anchor on the serving line in January!

But we weren't done with celebrations! On Fat Tuesday, we dressed up in purple and green and donned Mardi Gras beads (while Percy celebrated Black History Month). Sadly, our dessert supply was low so we couldn't offer guests two desserts! The Saturday crew hoped to served 314 meals on



Pi Day, but more guests than that walked through our doors. Our volunteers (and a guest) dressed in green for St. Patrick's Day.



And our Sunday crew celebrated Easter handing out hard-boiled eggs, filling plastic eggs with candy—and hiding eggs around the dining room for a spontaneous Easter egg hunt. Fun times indeed at Daily Bread!



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Hilary Clinton is credited with popularizing the phrase “**It Takes a Village**,” although it is widely believed to be an ancient African proverb.

Regardless of where the phrase originated, Daily Bread is extremely thankful that Champaign-Urbana is our village.