

SATURDAY MEALS PROGRAM

a year in review

VOL. 1



SERVED WITH LOVE

A YEAR OF SHARING GOD'S HARVEST

GOOD FOOD GOOD PEOPLE

Opening our doors and our hearts every
Saturday from 8am - 2 pm. All are welcome.
All are fed.

Happenings

Winter



Snow Boots

Remember that huge snow storm in February? Your donations of new or gently used boots kept feet warm all over the La Grange area. Thanks!

April

Easter Baskets

Volunteers organized Easter Baskets for our SMP children. Full of goodies, they made Easter just that much more festive this year. Thank you to the whole community for your unexpected acts of generosity all year long!

Summer



Garden Delights

All summer long, your gardens produced delicious tomatoes, squash, greens and other items.

Thanks to everyone who donated a portion of their garden harvest to our kitchen!

December

Christmas Eve Party

This year, Christmas Eve is on a Saturday, which means that SMP will celebrate with style! We will have music, gifts, and festivities of all sorts. Maybe even a special guest or two! Thank you to Moon Dance Diner for providing our meal. And thank you to all of our generous donors, volunteers and performers who make Christmas bright!

JUST ANOTHER SATURDAY MORNING...

The kitchen opens up early. Chefs arrive to unload groceries. Guests arrive to find a seat and our many early birds help set up the dining room for the day.

By midmorning, the parking lot is packed, the kitchen is hot, and the dining room is filling up. Someone is on their way to Dominick's to pick up the weekly provisions of donated bread and deserts. God's Closet is inviting guests in a few at a time to find a new pair of pants, just the right warm winter coat, or a few extra toiletries to make it through the month.

By noon, soup provided by Hinsdale Union Church has been served, and a delicious hot meal is on its way out to

the serving tables. "It takes a village," so the saying goes.

Generous deals from local merchants like DeVries and Tischlers help us keep our budget in order. Co-Directors Charlie and Ron, our Volunteer Coordinator, Beth, and our Saturday Meals Program Advisory Board help create a visionary plan for our Saturday morning ministry. Guests and volunteers treat the dining room like home, making everyone feel welcome and invited to the table. Please enjoy this newsletter with highlights from our 2011 adventures in hospitality.



Welcome to being *welcome*: a philosophy, a type of community and a way of life.

December brings the hope of Christmas and people's hearts turn towards service: phone calls and emails about volunteering increase. December also brings high heating bills and extra burdens: winter sets in and needs multiply. The kitchen and dining room at FCCLG become a critical place of welcome and hospitality. Your generosity is welcome. And you are welcome here.

We want to say THANK YOU to volunteers and donors, organizers and committed communities. Hospitality cannot happen without you. This has been an incredible year of volunteering. Our kitchen has been full of Girl Scout Troops and Confirmation Classes, individuals seeking community, and churches and community groups looking to reach out beyond.

I've grown accustomed to phone calls from families and groups looking to volunteer, and always look forward to hearing why you decide to reach out. But I was surprised to hear from one of our guests over the phone who called to say thank you. He said that when he came to SMP for the first time, he felt welcomed. Breakfast was hot and delicious. *And then* there was a

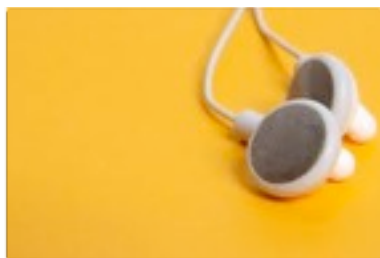


“Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Hebrews 13:2

clothing closet full of treasures that make his burden lighter. *And then* there was soup. *And then* there was lunch. *And then* the volunteers learned my name. Of course, we know these things happen every Saturday, but hearing him say “*and then*.” so many times, adding emphasis and joy, I was

reminded just how extraordinary, how significant, how unique and sacred our Saturdays are -- for guests and volunteers, for the congregation and the community. Thank you to everyone who makes SMP possible.

-Rev. Katie Lancaster, *pastor for SMP*



We make every effort to listen to the needs of both our guests and our volunteers. How can we serve the La Grange community better? If you have an idea for SMP, our SMP Advisory Board is always ready to listen! Contact the board by sending an email to katie@fcclg.org

Chicago Metropolitan Association comes to Saturday Meals Program. Yum!

The Chicago Metropolitan Association (CMA) came to FCCLG for an all day meeting. The CMA is made up of representatives from all of the Chicago-Area churches in our denomination: the United Church of Christ. Instead of canceling SMP because the building would be packed with area pastors and church leaders, we invited the CMA to participate in SMP! More than 200 people were fed, and all proceeds from the meal went to SMP to further our cause. It was a big reminder that “We can do anything through God who gives us strength!” Thank you to everyone who helped make the CMA meeting a success.



MORE THAN MEALS: A MINISTRY OF LOVE



School Supplies

Have you ever seen the list of supplies needed at the beginning of school for a 2011 brand new 6th grader? What about a 1st grader? It isn't cheap, and for families in need, the school supplies available at God's Closet this fall were a God-send. Thank you!



Undie Sunday

In October, FCCLG had an underwear drive called "Undie Sunday." We accepted donations of new, still-in-the-package underwear. Any size welcome! We collected over 200 pairs of underwear for God's Closet. Thank you FCCLG!



Toilet Paper and Necessities

Ever wonder why you can buy Doritos and caviar with food stamps, but never toilet paper? We may never know why! Toilet paper is one of those needs that never runs out. We have an ongoing collection of toilet paper, deodorant, feminine hygiene products, and diapers. If you feel called to donate *something* to our cause but don't know what to bring - this is something we're always looking for!

Washing and mending with love

Donations do not always come in the best of shape. But many of our volunteers work extra hours to make sure that all items that are made available to our guests are things that they themselves would wear.



Also, members from FCCLG volunteer every week to do the SMP laundry - making sure that we have clean dish towels and aprons to wear at the start of the day. Thank you to our many laundry super heroes!

THANK YOU TO...

Our Support Network

Some people come every week, others contribute on a monthly basis, and some come only once, but find their lives changed.

Weekly Volunteers

You know who you are :)

We couldn't do this without you. Your dedication, love, knowledge and experience make our kitchen full, and bring light to our dining room - sometimes figuratively, through smiles and love, and other times literally, since you've been around long enough to know where the breaker box is!

St. Isaac Jogue

To George and your crew

Once a month, George Casson brings a collection of youth and adults to cook in our kitchen. Not only that, they often bring all the ingredients necessary to make a delicious meal. Thank you for your time, talent, treasure, generosity and love.

Moon Dance Diner

With two locations in the western suburbs, Moon Dance Diner not only makes delicious food in house, they also provide a hot lunch once a month for SMP. This year's Christmas Eve dinner will also be catered by Moon Dance, and their owner Theresa.

Hinsdale Union Church

Every week, SMP serves delicious, hearty, meaty soup that is lovingly at Hinsdale Union Church, where they make one pot of soup for us, and two pots for our sisters and brothers at San Lucas UCC in Humboldt Park!

"Lord to those who hunger, give bread. And to those who have bread, give the hunger for justice."

Latin American Prayer





SMP served lunch for 250 pastors and church leaders at the CMA meeting in October, which raised over \$1,200 for the program. The food was so delicious that dozens of people asked for the recipe. Here it is!

BEST RECIPE OF 2011

Chicken Swiss Stuffing Bake

- 6 Boneless Chicken Breasts
- 6 Slices Swiss Cheese
- 1 Can Creme of Chicken Soup
- 3 Cups Pepperidge Farm Stuffing
- 3/4 Cup Melted Butter

Place the chicken breasts in a greased baking dish. Lay (1) slice of Swiss cheese on top of each chicken breast. Spread 2 tbl. soup mix over and around cheese. Add 1/4 cup water to remainder of the soup mix and pour soup over chicken. Spread stuffing over the top.



Drizzle melted butter over the stuffing. Bake uncovered @350 degrees for 50 minutes or until dish starts to bubble. After removing chicken from the oven, let rest for 15 minutes before serving.

SATURDAY MEALS PROGRAM

join the blessings

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NAME

Address