

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

October 2022



**VOLUNTEER IN  
THE KITCHEN!**



## The Production Kitchen's Cookin' Now!

The concept for the new client choice model-based The Market at Catholic Charities (CC) includes a “production kitchen” that is staffed by professional chefs, volunteers, and eventually chefs-in-training. The objectives for the kitchen include:

- Reduce or eliminate the food that CC has to throw away
- Providing ready-to-eat complete, balanced meals, and portions of meals – like a soup, cooked ground beef, or a sauce, package and label those meals or portions for distribution to clients
- Providing meals to Porta Caeli families, The Market volunteers, and CC staff
- Fulfilling catering requests for both onsite and offsite meetings and gatherings
- Finally, The Kitchen would serve as a culinary training site for individuals who want to get a job in the restaurant industry.

Chef Michael Fusco and his staff of volunteers (two of which are former chefs themselves) are meeting many of these objectives with donated food that otherwise might spoil. See the accompanying photos. Complete packaged meals are already going into the refrigerator – and going out almost just as fast as when they go in! Meal portions are hard to keep in stock.

Christi Johnson has volunteered to handle much of the business-related paperwork for the kitchen, and as part of her responsibilities, she produces a report detailing how many meals, portions, catering requests, are created by The Kitchen each week. See the ‘Chopped By the Numbers’ box accompanying this article on the next page for details on what food was produced the week of August 22-26.

## Loaders

You don't have to be a gorilla, but it helps to have strong arms and back to do this job! The loaders at The Market take clients and their groceries out to their cars and load whatever bags and loose items are in their cart into the back seat, or trunk, or basically wherever room can be found. Not all clients arrive in cars though – one or two come on mobility scooters, a few on home-made motorized bikes, some walk, many come with their neighbors and friends (who also are shopping) and others have taken the bus. No matter how people arrive, the loaders find some way to get the client with as many groceries as they can manage back on whatever conveyance they used.

Client registrars have heard just about everything from clients – but loaders have not only heard just about everything, but they've seen it as well – up close. This writer, when volunteering as a loader, used to say that he'd seen everything but the kitchen sink in the back

of clients' cars, but had to take that back a few days later when a kitchen sink was indeed spotted in the back of a pickup truck!

We need to appreciate that while The Market and The Warehouse can be relatively comfortable places to work, loaders can only rest inside – most of their time is spent in the weather, and it might be 100° it might be 50° and raining, or it might be 25° with snow falling. During heavy downpours clients' cars are loaded at the door rather than in the parking lot, and during extreme cold, a loader might work for only 20 minutes before being relieved.

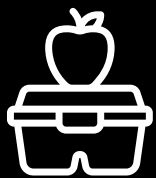
Please consider the loaders' job when helping clients put groceries into bags: loose items take time to manage, and items with sharp edges – like a box of macaroni, for example, are very good at ripping sacks. And remember, these folks do a lot of walking and lifting; after a day or even a morning one can get very tired.



## Senior Bags

Every Friday, volunteers in The Warehouse and The Market create 60 bags that are distributed to older Tulsans that have difficulty getting to a grocery store. It's sort of like Meals on Wheels, except the bags are loaded with fresh produce, bread, and something sweet.

Bags are kept in The Market's refrigerator overnight until a Modus driver comes by on weekends to pick up the bags and deliver them to clients. An upcoming newsletter article will focus on Modus, so we can learn much more about this unique service and how Catholic Charities uses it to help our clients.



247  
LUNCHES  
PROVIDED



52 Porta Caeli meals

16 catering  
boxed lunches

Here's what was produced in The Kitchen the week of August 22-26

31 pints  
jambalaya

63 quarts  
beef stew

40  
fried chickens

162 pints  
tomato sauce

61.5 portions  
brisket

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

# Steve Pollok

In 2021, Steve answered an ad in the Church of the Resurrection bulletin asking for volunteers to help with distributing food at the Outpost. He showed up, and has shown up every time since then, on his bicycle – riding almost 15 miles one way from his home in south Tulsa to Catholic Charities' main campus. Steve and his wife Sharon share a car because Steve gets around on his bike – a choice he made years ago after he sold his insurance business and retired.

Immediately after retiring, he took off and rode over to Booneville, MO, to pick up the Katy Trail and began riding upriver, roughly following the route that Lewis and Clark took to Oregon during their trip in the early 1800's. Steve, however, rode through Glacier Park (not on the Lewis and Clark route) and after 3,000 miles, ended up in Seattle, where he spent 10 days recuperating with friends who lived there.

However....

When Sharon came to Seattle to pick him up and bring him home, he mentioned that he'd never traveled down the Pacific Coast Highway, and since he was already at one end...

He got back on his Dutch-made Koga Trekking bicycle and



rode the distance from Seattle to Santa Barbara, putting another 1,300 miles on his bike. He arranged to ship his bike back and finally got on a plane to Tulsa.

He's since ridden the Natchez Trace (only 450 miles from Natchez MS to Nashville) but again, he rode over to the starting point, adding another 500 miles. This time, Sharon picked him up in Memphis (where he'd ridden to from Nashville) and brought him home.

When Sharon retires from her work in a local hospital's newborn unit next Spring, they both plan to travel, but probably not on a bike!

Steve wanted to mention that as polarized as our country seems to be now, he's found in his travels nothing but the

## 2 TRUTHS & A LIE

Can you figure out which is the lie?

- Steve and Sharon took a two-week backpacking trip throughout Europe using Eurail to get around Holland, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy without a single hotel reservation.
- Steve has backpacked parts of the Appalachian Trail and the Camino de Santiago.
- Steve's 96-year-old dad still regularly rides his bicycle.

The answers will be in the next newsletter!

### Jan Dailey's Answer:

Jan does not have an MBA from OSU

nicest, friendliest, most helpful people everywhere he's been. People may disagree, they may not support the same causes, but 99% of the time they were standing by to offer whatever assistance he needed.

If it's not obvious by now, you should know that Steve has the nicest, most understanding wife in the world.

## CHEF MICHAEL'S RECIPE OF THE MONTH:

# Roasted Sweet Potatoes with Pineapple Butter

### Ingredients:

- 4 medium sized sweet potatoes (washed and scrubbed)
- 4 oz. (1 stick) quality unsalted butter
- 1 tbsp. light brown sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla
- 1/8 tsp ground nutmeg
- ½ cup fine chopped "ripe" pineapple (Canned can be used but well drained)

### Directions:

1. Roast sweet potatoes at 375F. for 1 hour or until tender. (soft)
2. Whip butter in bowl or mixer until soft.
3. Add brown sugar, vanilla and nutmeg and mix evenly.
4. Use a scoop to portion
5. Top hot sweet potato with mix when serving. (approx.. 2 oz.)



## Day of Blessings is comin' home!

**Mark your calendars for Saturday, Nov. 19 for a special day of blessing our neighbors in need.**

We're returning to the timed ticket system and there will be several volunteer shifts for the day. We'll be building the food bags in our warehouse - as the event happens - and helping our neighbors carry their holiday ham dinners to their vehicles. The Holy Family Cathedral Knights of Columbus will be hosting a pancake breakfast for our neighbors in the classrooms located in our Education Center, and we'll have some other blessings too!

Days of Blessing are a great way for families, friends and groups to volunteer together, and to be part of Love Changing Lives!



Please use the QR code here to sign up to volunteer for either the Friday afternoon or Saturday opportunities using our Thanksgiving Day of Blessings SignUp Genius.

## GET INVOLVED



Volunteer with us! [cceok.org/volunteer](http://cceok.org/volunteer)

Join our Facebook Group!

For story ideas, feedback, etc.,  
email: [volcommunications@cceok.org](mailto:volcommunications@cceok.org)