

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF EASTERN OKLAHOMA

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

August 2021



POP UP FOOD PANTRIES

We have begun a street ministry food distribution! This is a grass roots effort to help serve our North Tulsa community struggling with food insecurity.

These Pop-Up Food Pantries are slower paced than our Outpost operations in order to allow volunteers more time to engage in conversation with individuals and families. This part is actually more the focus than the food itself.

Author James Martin, SJ writes in his book "Jesus: A Pilgrimage," that people often don't realize how something they believe to be small can become, through God, something much bigger. A couple of bags of food during one two-hour pop-up are examples of our own loaves and fishes. Standing out in the rain or in the heat to welcome, chat with or pray with someone is another example of our loaves and fishes.

"We are invited to trust that the few loaves and fishes we bring will provide nourishment, even if we cannot see the results," Martin said. "...Jesus accepts what we give, blesses it, breaks it open, and magnifies it. Often in ways that we don't see or cannot see. Or will not be able to see in this lifetime. Who knows what a kind word does? Who knows what a single act of charity will do? Sometimes the smallest word or gesture can change a life."

To be part of this opportunity, contact Barbara Bird in the Volunteer Office, bbird@cceok.org.

Upcoming Dates:

Tuesday, August 10
6:30 – 8:30 pm

Saturday, August 21
10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Tuesday, August 24
6:30 – 8:30 pm

ANITA MILLS AND THE GARDEN MINISTRY

Did you know that some of the produce given out at the Food Pantry was actually grown by Catholic Charities?

Catholic Charities' Garden, under the direction of Garden Manager Anita Mills, grows vegetables almost year-round. Most of the yield goes to Chef Michael's kitchen, but what the kitchen cannot use is taken to the Food Pantry for distribution to the Tulsa community. How wonderful to be able to give those in need some freshly grown produce!

The Garden Ministry, which Anita has overseen for some time, grew out of (pun intended) vegetable gardens which were put in place 8-10 years ago for the benefit of the residents at St. Elizabeth's Lodge and Madonna House. The gardens are a series of open-air, raised beds surrounding the shape of a cross. The wooden beds were built over the years by Boy Scouts within the Tulsa campus courtyard. The gardens were under-utilized for some time, until Chef Michael arrived and wanted to use produce from the gardens to source his kitchen. Last year a friend brought James Spicer from Green Country Permaculture and Anita to meet with Chef and draw up a plan for the garden.



Chef Michael's Garden Fresh Recipes SUMMER VINE RIPE TOMATO SALAD

Ingredients

- 1/2 white onion
- 2 jalapeños, seeded
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1/4 cup cilantro
- 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice, plus more to taste
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 4 oz tomatillos, peeled, rinsed, and quartered
- 1/2 English cucumber, quartered
- 1 cup baby arugula, loosely packed
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 1/2 lb heirloom tomatoes, some sliced, some cut into wedges
- 1/4 cup minced herbs, like cilantro, basil, or parsley
- Flaky sea salt (like Maldons), for garnish

Directions:

1. In a blender, combine the onion, jalapeño, garlic, cilantro, lime juice, tomatillos, cucumber arugula, and vegetable oil. Blend to purée. Season with salt, to taste.
2. Place the tomatoes in a large mixing bowl. Add about 1/4 cup of the dressing and gently toss to dress the tomatoes.
3. To serve spoon some dressing on a serving platter and spread to coat the bottom of the plate. Top with the tomatoes, sprinkle with the herbs, and garnish with salt just before serving.

The garden has about 750 sq ft of growing area irrigated with soaker hoses. Last year, from March to October, the gardens yielded between 700-800 lbs. of produce - more than a pound of produce per square foot of growing space! Anita shielded the garden from the winter elements by covering the rows, allowing the garden to produce kale, turnips and onions throughout the cold season.

Chef's direction to Anita for specific produce is rather loose: basically "Whatever you grow, I will use". The gardens' green beans, cucumbers, and tomatoes are then used by Chef to create the wonderful food he provides.

The crops are on rotation, using organic farming methods and an 'integrated pest management' approach. This methodology uses herbs, worm castings, compost, and other plants to deter pest and insect damage and to build and enrich the soil naturally.

Under Anita's direction, the gardens are maintained by a cadre of 'regular' volunteers, consisting mostly of retirees, and several 'irregular' volunteers, consisting of young people who fulfill community service hour requirements. Anita views gardening as an opportunity to teach, particularly younger volunteers, that nature is everywhere, and that weeds, bugs, birds, and plants all are working together.

Members of the recently launched Madonna House - St. Elizabeth's Lodge Garden Club are now growing peppers and tomatoes in 5-gallon buckets adjacent to the garden beds. The plants can be taken by the residents when they are ready to leave. The very act of growing food when a person is food-deprived, or when their life is out of control, is empowering and a measure of control itself.

Anita's background is in financial services, corporate compliance, and as a paralegal. She has been gardening all her life, but got her start with demonstration gardening while working at an organic food store, growing food in a 'backyard' setting, and demonstrating what/how food independence could be realized in that type of space.

The Garden Ministry at Catholic Charities is a hidden gem. In addition to growing produce to feed volunteers, our Madonna House & St. Elizabeth's Lodge residents, and our Outpost visitors, Anita and her team share ideas about fresh food, nutrition, and organic farming and pest control, with the added value of the boost in self-confidence and food independence for those they mentor. What a gift!

Chef Michael's Garden Fresh Recipes

FARRO SALAD

Ingredients

- 3 cups water
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 1 cup farro
- 1 cup oil-cured olives
- 1/2 cup diced red onion
- 1/2 cup diced carrot
- 1/2 cup diced celery
- 1/2 cup diced, trimmed fennel
- 1/2 cup peeled, seeded, and diced cucumber
- 1 cup sliced plum tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons capers
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped garlic
- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 2 tablespoons chopped basil
- 2 tablespoons chopped mint
- 1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper

Directions:

1. In a 2-quart pot over medium heat, bring the water and 2 teaspoons of the salt to a boil. Pour in the farro and simmer until tender, about 20 minutes.
2. Strain the farro and immediately return it to the warm pot. Pan steam it by covering the pot and letting the steam finish cooking the farro, about 10 minutes.
3. Mix the cooked farro with the olives, onion, carrot, celery, fennel, cucumber, tomatoes, capers, and garlic. Add the olive oil, vinegar, and herbs. Season with the remaining 1 teaspoon salt and the pepper.



2 TRUTHS & A LIE

Anita has two truths and a lie to share. Can you figure out which they are?

BILL GRAHAM: Attended the Jefferson Airplane concert live at the Fillmore in San Francisco in 1967.

HOWARD HUGHES: Armed with a minor in Geology, worked as a well logger in Texas.

QUEEN MARGARETHE II: Studies and practices the Danish art of nålbinding - an ancient knitting technique.

The answers will be in the next newsletter!

Answer to Barry Corum's 2 Truths and a Lie: Barry has not been to Peru like Indiana Jones.



984
VOLUNTEERS
 served in the Food
 Pantry/Warehouse during
 the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year.
 Together, they gave
34,315
HOURS

Save THE Date

16TH ANNUAL
**COOKING UP
 COMPASSION**
 2.26.22

BENEFITING THOSE SERVED BY CATHOLIC CHARITIES

FEATURING THE RETURN OF THE PARTY CRASHERS BAND	AT THE NEW GRAND BALLROOM AT COX BUSINESS CONVENTION CENTER	2022 EVENT CHAIRS: MANDY AND BLAKE ATKINS
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 For story ideas, feedback, etc.,
 email: volcommunications@cceok.org