

# 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.*  
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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. Lunches are served from 11:00 to 12:30 pm to anyone who walks through our doors.

***“There Ain’t No Point in Making Soup Unless Others Eat It...  
Soup Needs Another Heart to be Warmed by It.”***

People who don’t know much about Daily Bread Soup Kitchen are often surprised to learn that we serve our guests much more than soup. A guest once told me that we shouldn’t even call ourselves a soup kitchen because what comes out of our kitchen is a ‘whole dang meal.’ And he’s right. Every day, every guest who comes through our door is offered an entrée, a vegetable, a potato or rice or pasta, a salad, usually fruit, a dessert—and a steaming bowl of soup! And, every day, hot or cold, dry or wet, most of our guests choose to add a bowl of soup to their tray. Usually our soup makers create more than one pot of soup, and our serving line slows down as guests ponder their choice. It’s been a long, hot, and busy summer at Daily Bread, we’ve served well over 200 guests every day, many of them children--and gallons and gallons of soup.



The poet Maya Angelou once wrote, *“Whenever something went wrong when I was young—if I had a pimple or if my hair broke—my mom would say, ‘Sister mine, I’m going to make you some soup.’ And I really thought the soup would make my pimple go away or my hair stronger.”*

There’s an old Yiddish proverb that says *“Worries go down better with soup.”* We frequently see guests come in with a frown, but they usually leave with a smile. Soup helps! Of course, desserts help too.

The soups we serve every day seem to warm the hearts of our guests. Our guests are grateful for the hot meal they get, and many are quick to compliment our cooks when they especially enjoy a dish. And the most often complimented dish is always the soup.

***“Only the Purest of Hearts Can Make a Good Soup.”***

**Ludwig van Beethoven**

We're not sure what made Beethoven a connoisseur of soup makers, but he does seem to be on to something. We at Daily Bread are very proud of the men and women who make soup for us every day. Daily Bread operates with unique daily crews. Each day has its own cooks, its own dishwashers, its own servers, its own way of operating, and its own soup makers. We'd like to introduce you to the special souls who keep our soup pots boiling and our guests asking for seconds.



Monday is lucky to have not one, but two soup makers, **Joe Rank**, with 20 years as a Naval Officer and 25 years as a University of Illinois Alumni Association Vice President, and **Ron Alexis**, a retired pharmaceutical salesman. (Joe claims expertise as a dishwasher as well.) Both enjoy the camaraderie of the Monday volunteers. Ron says that his main objective is to fill the pots up, quite a task when you're preparing soup for over 200 guests every Monday. He likes to have the dishwashers test the soup first. If they say it's okay, he serves it. (Actually, he serves it even if they don't say it's

okay, but in general, Monday's soups are delicious and greatly enjoyed by the guests.)

Monday's best soup is "Cream of Potato," made with lots of bacon, a tray of leftover mashed potatoes, newly cooked potatoes semi-pureed with the immersion blender, onions, butter, milk, and spices. It's always a hit with the guests and never any leftovers. Monday's worst soup was a corn chowder that was so sweet and so bad that it didn't make it past the dishwashing tasters.

Tuesday's soup guru **Kathleen Smith** came to Daily Bread after 43 total years of teaching math in Pittsburgh, Ireland, Japan, Holy Cross School, Columbia Middle School, Franklin Middle School, Champaign Central, and the U of I math department. Whew! Kathleen may get the prize for the most creative soups. None of the Tuesday crew will forget the time that she turned multiple bottles of donated Bloody Mary mix into "Bloody Mary Tomato Soup." She's created myriad versions of 'Hot Dog' soups once she realized that there was such a thing—and an unending supply of hot dogs in the freezer. There was the time she turned a pan of Chicken Kiev donated from Hendrick House into "Chicken Noodle with Spinach" by adding egg noodles, milk, and sour cream. Or the time she combined leftover lasagna with succotash and called it "Tomato Vegetable with Noodles."



Kathleen's most unique soup would have to be her "Oxtail Soup." She happened to be in the kitchen when we got a donation of 56 frozen oxtails! Three weeks of meat prep: braising, broth making, bone removal, etc. was worth every minute. She put "Oxtail Soup" as the name to see how many guests would know what they were getting, and it was amazing when they saw it. Many had fond memories of "Oxtail Soup," and Kathleen's version did not disappoint.

However, her similar experience with goat meat did not go quite so well. After a similar three weeks of preparing the meat for "Goat Meat Stew," it was, in her words, "AWFUL!" Tuesday will never again serve goat! There was also a spicy ham and bean soup that was too spicy to serve. The whole pot ended up down the drain.



**Andy Sofranko** gets the prize for being the longest-serving soup maestro. After retiring from the U of I, he's been volunteering at the Soup Kitchen (then known as St. Jude's Catholic Worker House) for 15 years and serving as Wednesday's 'soup-master' for twelve years. (At the time of his promotion to 'soup master,' Andy was the #2 soup sous chef and also the kitchen floor scrubber. He thinks his promotion might have been based not so much on his soup making ability as the Wednesday crew's worry that he might stop scrubbing the floor if he didn't get the top job.)

Andy claims that his soup making skills come directly from his Czechoslovakian grandmother, who always had a pot of soup simmering on the stove and from his mother, who claimed that "*Taste is the main ingredient of any soup.*" Andy's philosophy is similar to his mothers. He starts with only a vague idea of what kind of soup he will end up with, then adds ingredients, herbs, spices, until the soup takes on its own identity, that TASTE his mother pontificated about. He also believes the old adage "Too many cooks in the kitchen spoil the soup," has no place in his soup kitchen and is happy to get ideas and tips from the Wednesday crew.

Andy fondly remembers the time he was making chili when he realized that we had no tomatoes in any form in the pantry—no cans, no fresh, nothing. Nothing, that is, until Mary Lou remembered that we had dozens of pouches of pineapple flavored barbeque sauce. When the first guest looked into his bowl and asked, "What kind of chili is this?" our intrepid volunteer answered without batting an eye, "Why, it's Hawaiian Chili." No one asked for seconds that day—and Andy is still wondering what his mother would have said about the taste of that soup.

**Karen Kane**, our Thursday soup maker, has been a Daily Bread volunteer for ten years. A jack of all trades, Karen has served on Daily Bread's Board, writing grants, maintaining the website, and serving on the fundraising committee that raised the money to build our current facility. She's also a Yoga instructor and a somewhat newbie to the soup making role.

Karen tries to not get too wild with her soups, because she does want the guests to eat and enjoy them! One morning she found some leftover Asian vegetables and chicken from a dorm that she turned into "Asian Chicken Noodle Soup." It was not a hit! (According to Karen, and I'm sure that other cooks would agree, you can always count on the dish scraping crew to let you know what's not popular.) One of Karen's tricks is to make sure that if there is an unfamiliar ingredient being used, such as tofu, chickpeas, etc., that item definitely does NOT appear in the soup name! (Editor's note: I distinctly remember back in my soup serving days that if I told guests that the soup was "Beef Barley", no one wanted it; if I called it "Beef Vegetable," it was a hit!)

Karen enjoys making "Vegetarian Vegetable" soup, a favorite, especially if she adds noodles. "Cheese Soup" is always a hit too, so, when the ingredients are there for that one, she definitely makes it. Once she tried to use cheese-filled gnocchi, but "Creamy, Cheesy Potato" soup was a bust.

As Andy points out, soup making is actually a group affair. Karen's favorite soup hack comes from Thursday cook Yvette: use instant mashed potatoes to thicken a soup.





**Bill Million**, Friday's soup maker, is our newest volunteer. Recently retired after spending 38 years with the University of Illinois Extension including the last 17 as the 4-H Youth Development Specialist, Bill is happy to have the opportunity to help individuals who experience food insecurity.

Bill enjoys the surprises that soup makers encounter, never knowing what will be waiting for him in the freezer or walk-in cooler each week. He is grateful, as are all our soup makers, for all the donations of fresh produce, nutritious 'leftovers,' etc., that make the challenge of making huge volumes of soup much easier. Bill's most popular soup so far is "Southwestern Chicken Noodle." He also likes making different varieties of chili and likes to use lots of fresh veggies. Another favorite is "Stuffed Pepper Soup" made from leftover stuffed peppers and taco-flavored hamburger.

Bill hasn't had a soup disaster so far, but he's new at this. His day is undoubtedly coming!

**Jeff Carns**, weekend soup star (and newly appointed Daily Bread Treasurer), only recently retired from his job as an accountant at the University, but he's been making soup on the weekends for a long, long time. It was Jeff and his weekend crew who served hot soup and sack lunches from our van when Daily Bread served lunch at New Covenant Church and was unable to serve a hot lunch on weekends. And it was Jeff who made all that soup!

Jeff's main soup making goal is to find a good use for leftover foods from previous days or food that comes in from the dorms. Often the quantity is too small to make a dish out of it, but anything goes into Jeff's soup pots. Every soup he makes is unique because he will probably never have the exact combination of ingredients again!

Some examples of Jeff's creative soups: There was a period of 6-8 months at New Covenant where we kept getting bags of bacon ends, real bacon that had been cooked and cut up. For several months his most common and popular soup was "Bacon Potato Soup." Another time he found a bunch of cases of little jars of meatballs that were intended for toddlers. No one was inclined to serve them as a main dish so he made "Meatball Soup." Jeff also views soup as a good way to sneak vegetables into people's diets and to use up the zucchini and squash that regularly gets donated in the summer. He cooks the vegetables, and purees them so they become part of the broth of the soup.

Jeff likes to claim that everyone on the weekend crews has fun except for him, but it's hard to imagine that he doesn't get at least a little bit of pleasure out of all the delicious and creative soup he makes for our guests.

Tuesday Soup maker Kathleen, when asked why she volunteers to make soup, shared this quote from the Dalai Lama. *"Now you see, we are guests on this planet, visitors who have come for a short time, so we need to use our days wisely, to make our world better for everyone."* Daily Bread is blessed to have soup makers who heed this advice, who use their gifts and creativity to create wonderful soups that fill the bellies and warm the hearts of the guests of Daily Bread.



## Daily Bread News

Anyone who has ever built a house knows that it's almost inevitable that, no matter how much you plan, when the paint finally dries and you move into your dream house, it turns out that there's something that you forgot or got wrong or didn't anticipate. No matter how much you love your new house, if you had it to do over again, there's usually something that you might do a bit differently.

Well, that's exactly what has happened to us here at Daily Bread. We, volunteers and guests, love, love, love our new home here on First Street. It's warm, it's bright, it's cheerful, it's perfect in almost every way—except for a couple of things. We planned the building on First Street with three major considerations: 1. We wanted to serve guests a hot meal seven days a week. Now we can do that. 2. We wanted more space to serve more guests more comfortably. And we've got that space. 3. We wanted room for storage for all the food items that we buy or that are donated. Whoops! That's our problem. We seriously underestimated the amount of food donations that would arrive on a regular basis. (Not that we're complaining; we are blessed by the generosity of our community!)

It's not only storage that we are short of. As Daily Bread has grown, so have the administrative responsibilities. Our Treasurer has been doing all of our financial work on a computer out of her home for years. All our records and paperwork have been stored in a volunteer's home office. That worked when we were smaller. Today, as we've grown, we are in great need of a private, secure office.

And we're also in need of space for additional programs and services such as our annual Backpack Giveaway and our Assistance Program that continue to grow.

For the last year we have been able to rent the building next door for a nominal fee. Thanks to a generous donation from a donor who wants to remain anonymous, we are currently exploring the possibility of buying the building. This would provide the storage space we need, the office space we need, and additional space for extra programs.

We'll keep everyone posted on this news as we wait and see what happens.



### Walk With Us on October 13

### Together We Can End Hunger in our Community and Around the World

The 2019 Champaign-Urbana CROP Hunger Walk will be held on Sunday, October 13, at 2 pm. CROP Hunger Walks are community-wide events sponsored by Church World Service and organized by religious groups, businesses, schools and others to raise funds to end hunger in the U.S. and around the world. For Daily Bread volunteers and supporters, this is your chance to help not only our own cause, but also those outside our community who desperately need assistance.

CROP Hunger Walks have a rich history of helping folks in need, both locally and globally. 75% of the funds raised in C-U will go to national/international projects, where the need is greatest, Right now CROP is helping refugees from Latin America, both in their home countries and as they seek asylum at the US border. 25% of the funds raised will stay in our community and support four local charities, Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, Eastern Illinois Food Bank, Sola Gratia Farm, and Wesley Evening Food Pantry. This is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of CROP Walk! Let's make it historically big in C-U!!

If you want to join the walk or make a donation contact Sandy Hannum ([smhannum@gmail.com](mailto:smhannum@gmail.com)) and/or check out the website at : <https://www.crophungerwalk.org/champaignil>

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## **Backpacks, Backpacks, Backpacks...**

The sun may be shining today and we're still wearing shorts and sandals, but December is only three months away. Once again Daily Bread will be holding its annual Christmas Backpack Giveaway. We will be looking for donations of backpacks filled with cold weather items for our guests. Backpacks are currently on sale, so now is a great time to get a head start on filling those backpacks. Last year, thanks to your generosity, we were able to give away over 800 backpacks. More information is available on our website [dailybreadsoupkitchen.com](http://dailybreadsoupkitchen.com)

**Cash donations always gratefully accepted  
at:**

**Daily Bread Soup Kitchen  
P.O. Box 648 Champaign, IL  
61824-0648or [dailybreadsoupkitchen.com](http://dailybreadsoupkitchen.com)**

