

Soup Scoop

Volume 43
November 2021

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. Due to COVID-19, take-out lunches are served from 11:00 to 12:30 pm through the front door.

“Daily Bread is the Best Soup Kitchen in the Whole State...”
A DBSK guest

Five years ago on December 20, 2016, Daily Bread opened the doors of our new building to our guests and served a hot lunch for the first time at 116 North First Street. It was a wonderful Christmas for volunteers and guests.

This Christmas, like last year because of COVID, our doors will remain closed, and we’ll be once again serving Christmas dinner in a biodegradable clam shell out that front door.

Still, recently, even in the dark days of the pandemic, a guest enthusiastically told Ruthann, “Daily Bread is the Best Soup Kitchen in the whole State!” (Ruthann didn’t ask how many soup kitchens he had tried.) Another guest told a volunteer, “Daily Bread’s meatloaf is better than my mother’s.” And another guest said, “Eating at Daily Bread is like going to the finest restaurant in Champaign.”

Daily Bread may or may not be the best soup kitchen in the state, but we are proud of our meatloaf, and we do feel like we’re trying our best. We are blessed with wonderful volunteers, with great cooks, with an incredibly supportive community, with amazing donations of food from local restaurants and institutions, and with guests who truly appreciate what we do.

As for Christmas 2021, well, once again it won’t be quite like our first Christmas back in 2016, but we’ll be handing out knapsacks, and we’ll be serving turkey with all the fixings, and we’ll be giving out stamped Christmas cards for guests to send to loved ones, and I’m sure that there will be volunteers wearing Santa hats and Christmas music playing and even candy canes. To paraphrase the Grinch, “Even COVID can’t stop Christmas from coming to the soup kitchen...”

Life these last few years with Covid hasn’t been easy for anyone. It’s been especially hard on our guests, many of whom struggle during even the best of times. Many of our guests struggle with issues of alcohol, drugs, mental illness, health problems, physical disabilities, homelessness, poverty, hunger, joblessness. Some of these issues we can help guests with at the soup kitchen, but most we can’t. What we can do—and what we do well, maybe as well as any soup kitchen in the whole state—is feed people a hot, nutritious meal every day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. We can’t solve most of the problems that our guests deal with, but we can make sure that they face those problems with a full stomach. And, at Christmas, with a candy cane.



“I Don’t Know Why You Call it a Soup Kitchen; You Should Call It a Full Meal Kitchen...”

A DBSK guest

Volunteers at Daily Bread are justifiably proud of the quality of meals that we provide for our guests seven days a week. Every day we send guests home with a nutritious and delicious meal (with a few exceptions—over-salted spinach tortellini was not a hit one Tuesday!). Every day we send guests home with a sack lunch to eat for dinner. We’ve even been able to update our sack lunch sandwiches from bologna to turkey or ham to provide better protein.

Here is what we served our guests one week in October. (Some spouses have been known to complain that they don’t eat as well as our guests, especially on the day that their spouse is cooking.)

Monday: We served 205 hot lunches, gave out 238 meat sack lunches and 9 PB&J. Also distributed water on request. Our hot lunch consisted of a chicken noodle casserole with lots of colorful vegetables, bread, a salad with cucumbers, tomatoes and peppers, as well as carrot and celery sticks. We served leftover watermelon and strawberries and assorted desserts. Leftover cheese ravioli was available for vegetarians. No takers.

Tuesday: A special thanks for a donation of shrimp that our creative cooks turned into delicious Shrimp Creole which we served on rice along with green beans, a salad, and a dessert. Guests who are allergic to shellfish were given the choice of Chicken Creole or vegetarian tortellini. The aroma of the Creole dishes led to a very busy day. We served 274 hot meals, handed out 312 sack lunches and 210 bottles of water as well as 50 bottles of juice from the foodbank.

Wednesday: Another busy day with lots of meals and a lot of assistance handed out to our guests. We served 275 meals and 280 sack lunches. The menu was Polish sausage or a brat with mac and cheese and a tossed mixed salad.

Thursday: We served Arby's beef sandwiches topped with sauteed peppers and cheese sauce, baked beans, coleslaw or chopped salad and a dessert. The last 40 or so guests received brats (from Wednesday). Vegetarians had spinach and ricotta ravioli with marinara sauce. We served 307 hot meals and 289 sack lunches.

Friday: 236 pastas with meat sauce, garlic bread, green beans, apple salad and dessert served today. Veggie meal consisted of okra stew on rice. Water was handed to those who were thirsty. 223 lunch bags out the door.

Saturday: We served 222 hot meals and 213 sack lunches, so it was a pretty busy day for us. We baked brownies to supplement our dessert supply. We served creamy chicken pasta, Southwestern chicken & rice, beef stew, Papa Del's pizza, Starbucks sandwiches along with potatoes with butter & sour cream, yellow squash with butter, chard with butter, carrots with butter, grapes, fresh pineapple, watermelon, and bread, hard boiled eggs, and a dessert.

Sunday: We served 238 hot lunches (a new Sunday record) and 217 sack lunches today. Our main entree was hamburgers. Our side was cheesy mashed potatoes, cubed oven fried potatoes, and finally pasta with tomato sauce. Our veggie was beets, then green beans, then carrots, and finally more carrots. Vegetarians received beans and rice in place of the hamburger.

“If I Had a Lot of Money, I Would Give it to Daily Bread...”

A DBSK guest

Daily Bread is fortunate to have great volunteers and great cooks, but what keeps us up and running is all the support we get every day from a generous community. Donations, large and small, arrive every day, and we are grateful for everyone and every group that supports our mission of feeding the hungry of our community.

1. Once again Empty Bowls held a lovely benefit for Daily Bread at Silvercreek Restaurant. Because of COVID the event was held outside. Miracles of miracles, while rain poured all around us, the beautiful courtyard at Silvercreek stayed sunny and dry the whole three hours of the event which raised \$10,646 for Daily Bread. Special thanks to Silvercreek owner Allan Strong, restaurant manager Grace Clem, the committee of Susan Garner, Linda Weiner, Colleen Freund, Geoff Bant, Patricia Knowles, Karen Pickard, and Ellen Harms. And an extra-special thanks to Susan and Linda, who are retiring from the committee due to family health concerns after years of extraordinary leadership. Under their leadership, Empty Bowls has raised over \$70,000 for Daily Bread. That’s a whole lot of meals! And a whole lot of hard work!



2. Joe Rank presented a check to Monday Crew Chief Clare Haussermann from the Sunrise Rotary.



3. Jim Hiller presented a check from St. Boniface Catholic Church to Assistant Treasurer John Ross, who received a check from the Community Foundation that same day. John says his favorite part of his job is opening envelopes with generous donations.

4. A long-time Daily Bread guest, affectionately nicknamed Piatt County by a Tuesday volunteer because of how much he liked to talk about his hometown of Monticello, once mentioned that he wished he could donate to Daily Bread. Sadly, his wish became true this fall. We received a beautiful card from Piatt County’s sister, telling us that he had died. Her brother, she wrote, had loved the soup kitchen, and had delighted in his nickname. In his honor she sent a donation of 50 dollars. ‘I wish,’ she wrote, ‘that it was a million.’ We look forward to reopening our dining room so that we can meet with guests like Tom, who enriched our lives with his stories of Piatt County.



“Daily Bread Volunteers are Great. They Treat You Like Family...”

A DBSK guest

The Daily Bread Board would like to wish all our volunteers, our supporters, and our guests a very Merry Christmas! Thank you for making DBSK (one of) the best soup kitchens in the state!

Christmas Wishes from the Daily Bread Board

Bob Goss, DBSK Board President and Wednesday Crew Chief--
“I’m wishing for the continuation of the wonderful support for DBSK from the community and from our volunteers in 2021 and beyond.”



Ellen McDowell, Founder, President Emeritus--“My earnest wish and prayer is that DBSK can continue its exemplary work of standing by the poorest of the poor in our community with a unique, creative, and non-judgmental love. Thank you, volunteers!”

Yvette Whitely, Vice President, Supply Guru, Thursday Crew Chief--“I’m wishing for stability in the lives of our guests, who face so much uncertainty in their daily lives. DBSK provides an island of calm with a hot meal every day.”

Jeff Carns, DBSK Treasurer and longtime Saturday Crew Chief--“I’m wishing for new volunteers for the week-end when we open our doors and start serving in person again.”

Pam Hagle, DBSK Secretary, Assistance Committee--“I’m wishing that Daily Bread continues to be a place where people in need from our community can feel safe and valued.”

Stevie Bennett, Food Crew, Wednesday volunteer--“Food to warm the stomachs of all, Food to calm the large and the small, Food assured to arrive each day, Food is what I wish for and pray.”



Ruth Branaman, Retired Thursday Crew Chief--“I’m wishing that I can soon see and talk with the whole Thursday Crew and all of our guests that I haven’t seen in all these months.”



Alex Breen, Technology, Sunday Crew Chief--“My wish is for no snow this year to make it easier for our guests to visit.”

Charlie Brown, Food Procurement--“I’m wishing to feed as many people as we possibly can.”

Jim Dobbins, Assistance Chairman, Wednesday volunteer--“I wish that the spirit of Christmas would remain in everyone’s heart throughout the entire year so that there is only kindness and no more meanness. Is that too much to ask for? Well yes, probably, but we can at least make a start!”



Charlie Evans, Assistance Committee, Tuesday Crew Chief—"My wish for the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen community in 2022 is that we are able to maintain respect and civility in all interactions."

Ruthann Evans, Grants Chairman, Assistance Committee, Tuesday Volunteer—"I am wishing our guests and all the unsung heroes at DBSK—food gatherers, cooks, sandwich makers, sack lunch fillers, and food servers—a healthy and mask-less year!"

Ellen Harms, Publicity Chairman, Newsletter, and Tuesday volunteer since 1993--I'm wishing for peace at the soup kitchen and peace in our Champaign community. Oh, and I'm also wishing for a successful Knapsack Giveaway."

Clare Hausserman, Monday Crew Chief--"I wish that volunteers could stop wearing masks and that guest could once again enjoy eating in our dining room."



Zarina Hoch, semi-retired Friday Crew Chief—"My wish is for DBSK to reduce our carbon footprint as much as we can within the constraints of public health. I would love for us to find ways to raise awareness of how we can do this at the kitchen."

Deepa Madhubalan, Hospitality Chairman and Assistance Committee, Wednesday volunteer—"I'm wishing everyone a healthier 2022 and that there is no need to say any more that we have to get used to the new normal."

Kate Metz, Food Procurement and Wednesday Volunteer--"My wish for Christmas 2021 is for us to honor all of the wonderful volunteers and supporters at

Daily Bread who donate their time, energy, kitchen skills, and other resources to help the soup kitchen be successful. I am proud to live in such a caring community."



Ron Sentowski, Friday Crew Chief—"I'm wishing for awnings in the front of the building to offer some weather protection to our guests who stand in line for a meal during cold and wet Champaign days."

Henry Szujewski, Maintenance Coordinator, Wednesday Cook--"I'm wishing the roof doesn't spring a leak!"



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“Are You Going to Give Out Backpacks This Year?”

Sadly, due to COVID, we are NOT going to be giving out backpacks this year, but we ARE going to be handing out filled knapsacks in mid-December.

We are asking for your help to fill the knapsacks. In specific, we are looking for donations of deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, shaving cream, razors, hand lotion for hands chapped by the cold, hand warmers, Chapstick, gloves, hats, socks, and scarves, as well as a small treat. Because these knapsacks will be a gift for our guests, we are asking that all items be NEW.

Donations can be dropped off at the back door of the soup kitchen (116 N. First Street, Champaign) between 9-12:30. Items can also be dropped off at Ellen Harms' (705 S. Elm Blvd. 356-2551), at Pam Hagle's (713 S. Elm Blvd. 359-3245), or at Ruthann Evans' (4414 Crossgate Dr. 398-5687). Groups that would like to have knapsacks to fill should contact Ellen, Pam, or Ruth. All donations need to be received by December 10. For more information, check our website dailybreadsoupkitchen.com

We are extremely grateful to everyone who participates in our Knapsack Giveaway and brings some of the joy and magic of the season to our guests at the soup kitchen.

