

Brunch Update

Issue 62 – Sept 2014

House of Sufism Charity Initiative

Addressing the most pressing needs of our community



Happenings

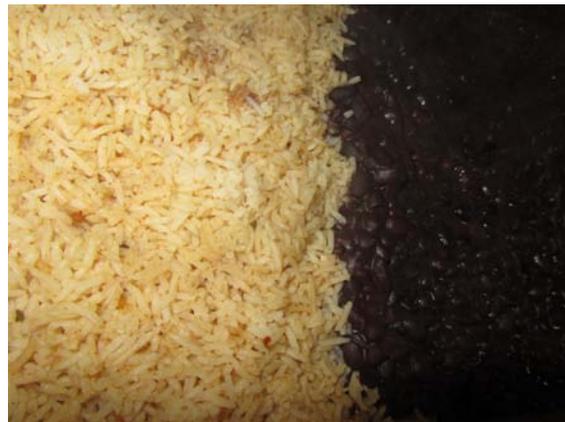
Greetings, friends! This month at the House of Sufism Charity Initiative has been fruitful as ever despite the late-summer malaise. We are delighted to report that there has been an excess of volunteers beyond the minimum necessary to sustain our services. Volunteers, both new faces and old hands, are truly the heart of our achievements. This trend of new volunteers attending and many returning is especially encouraging as we look ahead at broadening our efforts in addressing the needs of our community. On the immediate horizon, August 31st marks the first day we

will serve a meal at Bridge Over Troubled Waters, Boston's only all-youth shelter. With the support of our core foundation of volunteers and any new willing hands, we hope to spread our caring kindness and delicious food to an ever-growing network of friends in need.

In other exciting news, this month has brought about a new partnership with Whole Foods, who have generously offered to donate dozens of pounds of prepared foods every week. The bulk quality of Whole Foods' donations is unprecedented, providing residents with healthy and elegantly prepared food that shelters would not otherwise be able to offer. Of course, this would not be possible without the outreach and dedication of our volunteers, some of whom wake up at dawn in order to pick up donations and deliver them to local shelters.

As always, we are deeply grateful for your support and hope you enjoy the latest edition of our Brunch Update!

SUNDAY SUMMARIES



August 3rd: The food was absolutely delicious today. The main dish consisted of tender pieces of chicken soaked in a salty marinade, rice, and black beans. The chicken was cooked just right and the beans were well prepared, not too dry and not too moist. We had a new volunteer by the name of Justin help out and he did a tremendous job. Another volunteer was overcome by a poetic spirit and commented "[Brunch

service] enriches people's lives through services that inspire, entertain and foster the joy of *sharing* and the power of *caring* with hands of *helping!*"



August 10th: The food preparation was again superb as the residents and volunteers alike enjoyed stuffed red peppers immersed in a savory barbeque sauce and stuffed yellow peppers marinated with Thai curry sauce. There was a light-hearted moment when one of the residents grew very excited to begin the the brunch and exclaimed, "Let the emotion of the volunteers bring the room alive!"



August 17th: The main dish consisted of lasagna rich in tomato sauce and a seasoned ground beef mixture. Angie helped cook the dish which explains why it came out so heavenly. One of the residents exclaimed, "You guys have absolutely redefined lasagna!"



August 24th: Everyone enjoyed a dish of cantaloupe and watermelon to cool off during this hot August day, followed by a tomato rich salad and a dish of noodles, broccoli and chicken. A new volunteer by the name of Donna and Ali's twin children brought a joyous spirit and enthusiasm to the shelter. Many residents came down from their rooms to eat and socialize.



Reflections: *On Love and Service (Part 1)*

Charitable activities are part and parcel of the American experience. Students in many high schools around the country are required to volunteer a considerable amount of time doing community service. Many religious and civic organizations also dedicate a portion of their efforts towards charitable activities in the form of food and clothing drives. Additionally, many judges will assign community service hours as part of their sentencing.

Just as the intentions and circumstances of these activities are varied, so are the intentions of the beautiful people that volunteer at Boston's homeless shelters. They come with various intentions, perspectives, and desires. Some people choose to volunteer because they'd never volunteered before. They would like to know what it's like. Others come to fulfill an allotted amount of community service hours whether dictated by a school or a court. For another individual, one can say that charity arises from a place of guilt and/or redemption. Perhaps, one feels guilty from bad habits and decides to repent by doing something "good". Another situation can be that one gets dumped by their significant other and decides that volunteering will help improve the mood. I can go on and on!

I do not mean to diminish the actions of these people in any way; they are great people doing fantastic things. But I present their intentions first because we will eventually come to a particularly distinct group of volunteers. This distinct group appears different from the rest for two reasons.

Firstly, they do not volunteer temporarily; instead, service becomes a life-long philosophy for them. Secondly, they don't get hurt and discouraged by the actions of others during service. No matter how difficult the volunteering sessions are or even if they are occasionally treated with disrespect by the people they serve, they will not give up on service until the war on homelessness and hunger is won. How does this group manage to volunteer permanently without getting discouraged? Mohammad Noorae, caretaker of Boston's House of Sufism, thinks it's because of a love that flows through them.

What is this love and where does it come from? Well, first let's establish

that we all feel love at times throughout our lives. Everyone falls in love with a significant other or will sometimes feel intense love for their parents, friends, or even their pets. Some people even occasionally encounter the highest form of love, the selfless variety. The majority of people end up fearing this total love however, because of its threat to the self; they draw back and prefer to live the life of the average person, searching for personal pleasure and withdrawing from pain.

Because people choose to stay away from the abyss of love, they will often feel resentment, distrust, anger, hate, and other negative emotions. The specific goal of the Sufis, and particularly the Nimatullahi order, is to act as a conduit for selfless love. We desire to channel it inside our souls and to share it with others. It is this force and this force alone that allows volunteers and darvishes to conduct service *throughout* their lives. If a person volunteers without allowing for this current to run through them, then their service will last minutes, months, or even years but it certainly won't last forever. Service will only be permanent if it encounters love.

[Continued next month]



HOW TO GET INVOLVED

1. **Volunteer!** Sunday Brunch is a time commitment of only a few hours. Help us cook and clean or just spend time with our friends in need! Also, we need volunteers throughout the week to pick up donations from bakeries and deliver them to food pantries the next day.

2. **Monetary donations:** If you would like to make a contribution to House of Sufism Charity Initiative, you can write a check (payable to KN), use any credit card, or wire money through PayPal.

3. **In-kind donations:** We are always in need for milk, eggs, fruit, plastic bags, etc. for our Sunday Brunch. We also accept donations of items like household goods and furniture. All donations are tax-deductible.

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