

# Brunch Update

Issue 68 – Mar 2015

## Sufi Service Committee

*Addressing the most pressing needs of our community*



## Happenings

This month marks an exciting new beginning for our charity initiative! Dr. Alireza Nurbakhsh, Master of Nimatullahi Sufi Order and the Founder of our charity campaign, has established a new entity: Sufi Service Committee. Why? Operating as 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity makes us eligible to receive charity grants, to acquire more food for donations, and to expand our service to those in need. So while our name might have changed, our dedication to serving the most pressing needs in our community with love and professionalism remains ever true.

And with new names come new email addresses! Please direct all correspondence to [sufiserviceboston@gmail.com](mailto:sufiserviceboston@gmail.com).

This past month in Boston will go down in history as one of the snowiest on record. The city has been in perpetual crisis mode in an effort to clear out the snow; meanwhile simple mobility has become a difficulty for even the most able-bodied among us. It's times like this when we can be caught up in our own struggles, and yet if we are paying attention we realize just how crucial it is to be aware of the needs of those around us. Even a few inches of snow can make it significantly harder for the elderly and the mobility-impaired to travel safely. It's our duty within the community to recognize the needs of our neighbors and take the opportunity to serve locally – just a few extra minutes of exertion in the snow can improve the safety and welfare of everyone.

Despite the historic snow, volunteers were able to provide three brunch services in February, as well as making 13 deliveries of donated food to area shelters and food pantries.



## **Volunteer Reflection: Little Things Count!** **by Hal Grant**



Our children today have many more influences than just a generation ago: more data, more choices and certainly more opportunities to find themselves in challenging situations. I think back to my youth and growing up in a small midwestern town surrounded by family and friends, really like have an additional set of parents at the corner of every street. My brothers (I have two) and I were taught at an early age to make sure that we were respecting others, helping those who needed it, even if it was just shoveling the snow or taking back in the garbage cans. It seemed so natural that we never even questioned it. It was just what you did.

For my children (we have three boys), it has been more difficult. They did not live in a small midwestern town but were asked to move many times including to different countries. They did not have parents at each corner, but more often than not the unknown was lurking at every corner. So, you have to work harder at finding ways to give back, not necessarily big things, but little things like leaving your seat in a crowded metro to someone who needs it more, opening the door to a building for someone who has their hands full. I firmly believe that it is the small acts of kindness that matter the most and these are best set by example and these examples are best set by parents – it was true in my generation and it is true today.

So when you think that the world is more complicated, it is. When you think that it is difficult to guide your children in the right direction, it is. When you think you may be making mistakes, remember we all do. But the small acts of kindness cost nothing and certainly create a better world for all of us.

*Hal Grant began his career with Square D in January 1985 as a manufacturing engineer. He has been with Schneider Electric for over 25 years and has held increasingly responsible positions within the organization, in North America, Asia and Europe, and in various fields including product management, Technology, Supply Chain, IT, Customer Satisfaction and Quality.*



# Conquering Ourselves! - Zehra Ali

"Even after all this time, the sun never said to the earth, 'you owe me!', look what happens with a love like that- it lights up the whole sky."

- Hafiz

I have contemplated often what Hafiz meant when we wrote this quote and what implications it has even for our lives today. The first image that comes to mind is self-less giving without any expectation of something in return. Another layer is being radiant oneself and allowing that to reach others as well.

From random acts of kindness and compassion towards strangers to actively supporting and helping our loved ones, we are often called upon to determine how, what and when to give of ourselves. And when we do give, it may be from a place of feeling that it is second nature. Yet at times one may feel depleted or feel that there is a constraint or disconnect in the act of giving.

And so, even though one may feel the need to give, be altruistic and compassionate especially in a world with so many pressing needs and an overwhelming disparity, sometimes the giving is out of tune or rather one is out of tune with oneself. For that, one needs to journey within, as giving is constrained if one is anxious, distracted, conflicted, afraid to be vulnerable or on the other hand, looking for praise or validation in order to act.

Dr. Alireza Nurbakhsh, the current Master of the Nimatullahi Sufi Order, mentions that "only when we are not at war with ourselves and others that we become creative and sympathetic to others" and that "to live in harmony with others we have to first conquer ourselves". Being creative and sympathetic calls on the essence of our being human and are also cornerstones to peaceful living. The idea is not that one is in a position to give only when one has addressed all internal conflicts. Rather, if one simultaneously focuses on oneself, one can uncover the gift to connect, move and support those around in a more meaningful, fulfilling and effective manner.

*Zehar Ali is the CEO & Founder of Ghonsla, an innovative technology company that provides sustainable insulation products to underserved markets in Pakistan.*





## 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 bakery and food donations and deliver them to food pantries and shelters.
2. Monetary and in-kind donations: If you would like to make a contribution to the Sufi Service Committee Inc., you can write a check, use any credit card, or wire money through PayPal. We are always in need for milk, eggs, fruit, plastic bags, etc. for our Sunday Brunch. We also accept donations of clothes, household goods and furniture. Currently we need more clothes than household items. All donations are tax-deductible.

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