

Brunch Update

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Sufi Service Committee of Boston

Addressing the most pressing needs of our community



Happenings

Once again, it has been an eventful month for the Sufi Service Committee. Highlights included the joy of celebrating birthdays with our friends at the shelter, experiencing good food prepared by volunteers from a variety of cultures (Japan, Albania, Thailand), and reaching out to the greater Boston community about our cause.

Volunteers had the opportunity to attend a legislative session of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless, an advocacy group committed to the cause of eradicating homelessness in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In learning about the work of others to end homelessness on the policy side, we were also able to share our practical philosophy of working from the ground up - that very day we enlisted six



Fresh salads and fruits are expensive and hard to find for many in Boston

new volunteers to help us deliver excess food from local businesses directly to those in need. In the words of Linda Lingle, "We have come dangerously close to accepting the homeless situation as a problem we just can't solve." This mentality in politicians shows just how important it is for us all to engage with the issue of homelessness on a personal level.

A touching moment at the shelter came one Sunday this month when one formerly homeless resident, a young woman of 24, joined our volunteer crew in serving brunch. When asked what brought her to service, she replied: "Life

is better when I'm happy, but life is best when I make others happy!"



Meiko and Nader smile as they serve food



White couscous with red kidney beans, corn, and boiled eggs

REFLECTION FROM A VOLUNTEER

The chicken and rice prepared by Ali and Sally for brunch was so delicious that people kept returning to the serving table for seconds and thirds. You could tell the chicken was slow-cooked over a long period - the meat was so tender that it practically fell off the bone. It also came with a tasty yellow broth that many poured over the rice prepared with peas and carrots. Volunteers were happy to serve and everyone enjoyed the wonderful meal together.

After the main course, Mohammad surprised Emraan, a volunteer, with a birthday cake. He had found out about the birthday from Emraan's wife, Atena, who was also volunteering that day at the shelter. Mohammad seized the opportunity by having another volunteer buy a cake inscribed with Emraan's name. The surprise was a success and everyone was happy to join in the festivities.



This event exemplifies the camaraderie of the Sunday brunch service. No one knew it was Emraan's birthday but after finding out, the word was passed around and we bought a birthday cake and organized a celebration for him. This organic (and fun!) process seems to sum up how our volunteer work functions.



White kidney bean and potato soup

We try to be as nonhierarchical as possible amongst each other and the residents. One resident volunteered last Sunday and that form of role reversal is a regular occurrence. It is such trust that makes our work closer to an act of friendship rather than charity.

Jon, a resident of the shelter, said recently, "Sunday volunteers don't think of us as kids. We are grown up but we just happen to be poor! Such trust makes us feel a part of this charity. The menu is set by us. Service time is set by us."

This trust makes us not look at the residents as "they". Sometimes our friends at the shelter put on an apron and volunteer for Sunday Brunch. Lines become blurred. In fact, we even celebrate our shelter friends' birthdays in the same way we celebrate

those of volunteers such as Emraan. In so doing we are showing our unity and perhaps, by showing it, we can attain it.



Zaid dealing out pastries

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!
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.
3. Drive! We need volunteers throughout the week to pick up bakery and food donations and deliver them to food pantries and shelters.

Contact:

Moh Noorae
Sufi Service Committee of Boston
84 Pembroke Street, Boston, MA 02118
sufiserviceboston@gmail.com
www.nimatullahisufiboston.org/charity.html