

H
O
U
S
E
O
F
S
U
F
I
S
M



Seth and friends

A Golden Opportunity for Service

As of last month, the House of Sufism has started sending volunteers to St. Francis House in downtown Boston (information available online: <http://www.stfrancishouse.org/>). On September 15 and 22, Jeremiah, Mohammad, Mike, Adam, Bill and Andrea visited to serve lunch to a large number of Bostonians in need. St. Francis House is also now the primary recipient of our pastry donations—on Tuesday, September 24, we delivered a full van of baked goods from the Danish Pastry House to Seth, St. Francis House's head chef. He told us that the delivery was enough to serve as the basis for the next day's breakfast! Here, it bears pointing out that incredible scale of the operation at St. Francis House. On average, they serve between 300 and 450 people breakfast each day.

The quantity of people they serve is only one of the many noteworthy features we noticed at St. Francis House. One volunteer observed that many of the guests were fifty or older, which they took to highlight the connection between old age and poverty, attributing it to the greater difficulties associated with finding gainful employment among that age group. However, they also noticed that a number of men wearing ties and women in makeup were among the guests there at a lunch, which suggested that some employed people might also use St. Francis House's services as a way to save money, which could help keep them from homelessness.

more on 2

The atmosphere at St. Francis House is at once friendly and professional. A number of the guests smiled as they ate their lunch, and the men and women in the dining room participated in lively conversations together. Though it is staffed by a security guard, the threats to the



security there are minimal enough that he often also helps serve the meal.

The staff is as efficient as they are welcoming. One staff member, Rick, has been working at St. Francis house since the 1980s. He is a very thankful person. He was grateful for his job, since he could put food on the table for his family, and for everything volunteers did, no matter how small, he thanked them. He is a high-spirited person with sense of humor. The cook, Jennie, is very passionate about her job. "Anyone hungry can come to eat," she said. "We've prepared a meal for five hundred guests. If we have an overflow of guests, we give them sandwiches." She is extremely efficient and knows exactly when to delegate new tasks to a volunteer. She knows that feeding almost five hundred guests is a grave task, so when volunteers are available for help it is better to seize the opportunity. Otherwise, she would be stuck with an unbearable amount of work to do by herself. Even when she wanted go to press the button of the elevator, she gave Mohammad a very quick task to accomplish in those 30 seconds! On the first Sunday of our service with her, she had woken up at 3 am and began cooking meals at 5 am; but she gave no indication that she was tired while we helped her serve lunch. She did everything with contentment and happiness. When she was touring the storage room in the basement, she was so happy, it seemed like she was dancing in a ballroom. It did not take a much attention for someone to apprehend that she was fully aware of the deeper philosophy of why she is there and how crucial and helpful her service to the homeless and the hungry was. Her love for service and sense of belonging at St. Francis house is further indicated by her use of "my" in reference to many of the everyday items in St. Francis House's kitchen. She has the full responsibility for cooking and supervising all staff and volunteers for both breakfast and lunch and is also in charge of preparing to-go sandwiches for dinner. She maintains extremely high standards of cleanliness: she first has volunteers disinfect dishes, then shampoo then, and finally spot clean them. She is extremely intelligent and observant;



there's no need to repeat something to her, even on phone and or when facing an issue for the first time.

She maintains extremely high standards of cleanliness: she first has volunteers disinfect dishes, then shampoo then, and finally spot clean them. She is extremely intelligent and observant; there's no need to repeat something to her, even on phone and or when facing an issue for the first time.

Seth, the aforementioned head chef, is forty nine years old. He has graduated from cooking school and cooked in the US and Israel for 33 years. He is married with four daughters. Two things make him happy. First, the "income is okay, but benefits at St. Francis are great!" Second, he is happy to be doing "something good for somebody. Working here is not just a job. Money cannot buy how you feel. My goal is stay here until I retire. St. Francis is a great place to work!" he concluded. He clearly cares a lot about the people with whom he works. During the break between preparing and serving lunch, he was insisting that volunteers rest to get ready for next shift of work. He repeated "Eat!" to each of us a few times to make sure we are well-fed and had the energy necessary for the hours of work ahead. Mohammad asked Seth how he chose Jennie as his assistant. He said, "Her personality! The way she handles volunteers. The way to handle volunteers is just as important!" He added, "Jennie is a caring professional. She has a way to handle people that no one feels anything but proud while all tasks are done and done well." Seth said, "When I talk to her in the morning and I feel she is happy, this automatically means to me that everything from soup to nuts is fine in the kitchen, as well as the volunteers. She is not shy to let me know if she needs or does not know something. Jennie has a sense of humor."

How to get involved

1: Volunteer! It is a time commitment of only two hours: 2-4 PM on Sundays. Help us cook and clean or just spend time with our friends!

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

Mohammad Noorae 617 536 0076

House of Sufism

www.sufihouse.org

nimatuallahisufiorder@gmail.com

84 Pembroke Street, Boston, MA 02118