

Mission:

To provide a nutritious daily meal to the hungry of the area, as well as to provide a safe and sheltered place for social gathering.

THE SOUP KITCHEN



A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
1-269-925-8204

WINTER 2011 EDITION

CLIENT COMMENTS



Kelley

I come here sometimes and eat with my friends, but a couple months ago I came in and asked to volunteer. I finished high school, but I need job experience. I want to work in a restaurant, so this is a good place to learn. I've been doing all kinds of jobs here, everything from cooking to cleaning up the outside.



Joe

I ride my bike to The Soup Kitchen almost every day. I come down to talk with friends and eat. I am 86 years old. I live with one of my sons—I have 14 sons and 7 daughters. My three wives all passed on. Sometimes I talk with my friends and the younger people about the war. I was all over the world in WW2. I was in France, Belgium, Poland, Germany, the Philippines, Okinawa and Nagasaki in Japan. Everywhere we went was hard, but I will never forget the things I saw in Nagasaki.



Andrea

I moved back to Benton Harbor last May after living with my son in Holland for eight years.

When I heard about the Soup Kitchen, I first went there for a free meal a day, as I subsist on a very limited budget.

I did, in fact, find a meal, but more importantly, I found companionship and friendship. The people who eat there, the staff and those that cook and serve are beyond wonderful. Thank you to all of the supporters and contributors to the Soup Kitchen. You help more than you can imagine.





NEW BOARD MEMBER SUE BAILEY

I became a Board Member of the Soup Kitchen this past summer. The Soup Kitchen has been something I have supported in some way for years as my prior church, St. Luke's

Lutheran Church, was involved from the day Soup Kitchen opened its doors. My involvement increased after my retirement in 2006 from Finance & Accounting at Whirlpool Corporation. I found I enjoyed being at Soup Kitchen and meeting the clients.

There are so many ways to support the mission here. I have done a few... food or monetary donations, making cookies, volunteering, and, most recently, acting as coordinator and chef for St. Luke's serving days. I'm looking forward to participating in the Soup Kitchen's fund raising events and ongoing improvements in their processes and facilities.

I was sad to see St. Luke's close their doors in December of 2010, but I was thrilled to be part of the establishment of the St. Luke's Endowment Fund at the Soup Kitchen in 2011. This Endowment Fund is an important step in assuring that the Soup Kitchen continues to provide the daily meals (all 365 days a year) and the help in connecting our clients with agencies to aid in health, employment, education and housing needs.

I am honored to be on the Board and enjoy working with such an excellent staff and Board serving great people.

Sue 

Upcoming Events in 2012

January: Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament at the 5 O'Clock Bar & Grill. Call Ken Clark for more information at 927-8174

Annual "Soup Bowl" Bowling Tournament coming in April

Sunday, April 29 Tabor Hill Dinner



TABOR HILL WINERY & RESTAURANT SOUP KITCHEN BENEFIT PLAN ON IT, NOW !

It's not too early to "Think Spring" and the wonderful occasions that come with it. And, one of those special occasions will be on Sunday, April 29, 2012 at the Tabor Hill Winery and Restaurant.

That's when the Annual Tabor Hill - Soup Kitchen dinner benefit will be held. For those of you who have enjoyed this elegant event in recent years, chances are you'll be back for the 2012 version.

Think of yourselves arriving at the beautifully located Tabor Hill restaurant and being greeted by a hostess..... then guided to your own private table. Virtually each table has a view of the scenic rolling hills of verdant vineyards.

The Tabor Hill benefit is unique. It's a low-key intimate dinner event, with none of the typical fund-raising activities, such as, raffles, auctions, speeches 50-50's, etc.. The dinner includes your choice of wine or cocktails, your choice from a special menu list, hors d'oeuvres, dessert and gratuity.....in the comfortable ambience that characterizes the Tabor Hill facility.

The dinner donation is \$80 per person, with \$60 being tax deductible (Federal), and qualifies for a 50% tax credit in Michigan. We always advise consulting your tax advisor in matters of taxation. Donors who attend this event always seem to return. And, many who cannot attend, but believe in The Soup Kitchen's worthy cause.....respond with a contribution. The remarkable feature is that Tabor Hill donates all of the proceeds to The Soup Kitchen. And, Tabor Hill Vice President, Paul Landeck and his professional staff do it all, gratis !



This event is crucial in helping The Soup Kitchen to achieve its mission of providing a warm meal every day to the hungry of our area. We average more than 165 meals per day, with weekday servings being considerably higher than on weekends.

Don't forget ! Plan on joining your friends at Tabor Hill on Sunday, April 29, 2012.

WHAT IS THIS CRISIS FOR MICHIGAN'S POOR?

- 15,000 Michigan residents lost their food assistance as of Oct. 1, 2011.

DHS sent out about 5,000 letters to food stamp recipients telling them they were being removed from the program because their assets were believed to be higher than \$5,000; Another 80,000 letters were sent to food stamp recipients who may not qualify under the new law. Those recipients had to provide proof of assets by Sept. 30 or be cut off.

The state estimates 15,000 families will lose benefits immediately, with more families cut off as recipients undergo their annual case reviews over the next 12 months.

- Another 11,000 families are expected to have lost their cash assistance by October 1st, because of the state's new 48-month lifetime limit on cash assistance. At the same time, a program that helps pay heating bills for 95,000 needy families is on the blink.
- In July, the Michigan Court of Appeals struck down the financing system used by Michigan's Low Income and Energy Efficiency Fund. The Legislature hasn't created a new funding mechanism, so heating assistance will become an issue.
- Aside from more people needing food assistance, our area is losing the working population. As they move away to get a job, we are losing regular Soup Kitchen donors.
- The legislature has also eliminated the tax credit that allowed a taxpayer a \$100 per year tax credit (or \$200 for couples) for donations made

to food banks and soup kitchens. It may not sound like much, but this credit was estimated to have produced about 2.4 million dollars last year.

WHERE DOES THIS LEAVE US?

The timing of assistance cuts couldn't be worse. When added together, it will be devastating. The direct assistance to those in need is reduced or eliminated, and other legal changes and the poor economic climate are also reducing donations and donors to the voluntary non-profits who serve those populations.

We do not know the full extent of the effects, but we are bracing for higher numbers of daily meals and the higher costs associated with that. We have seen a steady 7% increase in the number of meals we served in the three months BEFORE the reductions in benefits.

How does it affect us here, in Berrien County? We have seen a none-too-subtle shift in our clientele over the past three years. Our population used to be about 97% black male adults, but it is not that way any more. There are many more women, many more children and young people, and many more Caucasians coming to The Soup Kitchen for a daily meal.

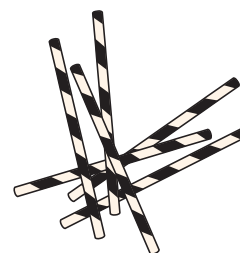
We are seeing many new clients who fit the following pattern: they have worked all their lives, but now they have lost their job, and when unemployment benefits ran out they lost their home. The next move is to one of the shelters, and finally we see them at The Soup Kitchen for a daily meal. These people usually do find work after a month or two, but most say that their old job was much better, paid more, and had better benefits.



Welcome Michiko

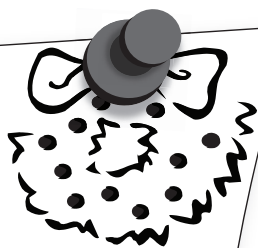
A volunteer coordinator for several years, Michiko Bonawitz has joined the Soup Kitchen staff as an assistant director.

A graduate of Michigan State University in Medical Technology, Michiko has worked as a Research Associate at University of Michigan and as a Pharmaceutical Sales Representative. Michiko and her family live in Stevensville where her 17 year-old old twins, Kirsten and Alec, attend Lakeshore High School.



Keep up between newsletters.
Visit our website at: www.soup-kitchen.org

Soup Kitchen Wish List



Spaghetti and elbow macaroni

Tomato paste and tomato sauce

Frank's Hot Sauce – Our clients love hot sauce to the tune of about a gallon a week.

Canned fruit – all kinds

Laundry soap, SOS pads, dish soap, kitchen cleanser and bleach are always needed

Manly aprons. We have worn out the nice twill Kitchen Aid aprons that our male volunteers preferred

As always, your monetary donations are very much needed. We can purchase food for 10-16 cents a pound... and the money is much easier to store than the cans!

SOUP KITCHEN PRESENTATIONS

We would be honored to present the Soup Kitchen story to your organization. Please call today to schedule a time and date.

STATE OF MICHIGAN FOOD KITCHEN TAX CREDIT

ACT NOW!
ENDS
DEC 31, 2011!

Michigan residents who donate to the Soup Kitchen get a tax benefit at both the state and federal level. Consult your accountant or tax advisor for advice on how your donation may qualify.

GLEANERS FOOD BANK

Churches are automatically eligible to purchase food at 17 cents (or less) per pound, including food in #10 cans, from the Southwest Gleaners Food Bank, 1488 E. Empire Ave., Benton Harbor. Unlike other organizations, churches are not required to be a 501 (c)(3). Please think about shopping there first.

For more information, contact SW Gleaners Manager, Rich Glista at 269-926-2646.

MATCHING GIFTS PROGRAM

The Whirlpool Corporation has one matching gift program to help maximize employees charitable donations.

The Matching Gifts Program matches personal contributions over \$50 with dollars from the Whirlpool Foundation. Full-time, salaried and hourly U.S. Whirlpool employees and retirees are eligible.

A Special Thanks to
Norene Laney
for her generous gift to
The Soup Kitchen!

BOARD MEMBERS:

Sue Bailey	Chris Heugel
Jill Beach	Laurie Lesauskis
Rob Burgess	Andy Takacs
KC Gast	Paula Vogie
Debbie Gillespie	Barbara Whitwam

Euchre Tournament Postponed

On Sunday, October 16, we'd hoped to stage our first "Battle of the Churches" Euchre Tournament with proceeds going to support the ministry of the Soup Kitchen. We had trophies, cards, and a room to set up in (courtesy of the Bistro on the Boulevard)... but we lacked one BIG thing. Players!

An informative mailing went out in mid-September and handouts were available in the Soup Kitchen as well. We also had personal conversations with persons from many churches (this is how the idea was "hatched" in the first place). But when the time came, almost all of the slots for 40 2-person teams were still open. We haven't given up on the idea, but we need to hear from you. Talk with Merry Stover, our Director about your suggestions regarding trying this again. We look forward to hearing from you soon!