

**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.



Learn about The Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen. Read all the newsletters. Donate any time. [www.soup-kitchen.org](http://www.soup-kitchen.org)

# The Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen



A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION • 1-269-925-8204 • SPRING 2015 EDITION

## CLIENT COMMENTS

**RICHARD** (no photo)

I been coming here for some twenty years. I come every day. I got no other place to go, nothin' else to do. I came down here when it (The Soup Kitchen) was on Pipestone, too. It was so small there that you had to watch your elbows to keep from hitting people. It was half the size of this place. I like coming here to talk to my friends.



**BRADLEY**

I've been in Benton Harbor for about eight months now. I was in the shelter, but now I have my own place on Columbus. The people who own it are really nice.

I'm trying to get a job now. I've done farm work and I worked in a restaurant. I like coming here to eat and see my friends from the shelter. I like the food.

**ANNIE**

This is a good place; I like the food. I've been coming here since they built it, and before that on Pipestone. I come to see people like Miss Barbara and Miss Ruth. They were friends of mine. Miss Barbara used to give me cakes for my birthday. We all sure do miss her. She helped a lot of people here.



## EMPLOYEE FEATURE



Hello, I'm Ray Osborne. I was raised in Cassopolis and attended Ross-Beatty High School. I am currently taking GED classes at the Bridge Academy in Benton Harbor.

I worked as a welder and a restaurant manager in Elkhart, Indiana before coming to Benton Harbor.

I have three children. Last week I attended a father-daughter dance with my 10-year-old daughter Elyse, and we had a blast. Maybe next time I will be able to get her to dance.

I love my time at the Soup Kitchen.



This year's Tosi's Minestrone Soup Run will benefit the Soup Kitchen. The run will be May 9th at 9AM. Check with Tosi's, their web site, [www.soup-kitchen.org](http://www.soup-kitchen.org) or the *St. Joseph Today* web site for more details.



## NEW BOARD MEMBER ROB ROMANO

Hello. My name is Rob Romano and I'm a new board member at the Soup Kitchen. My wife Heather and I live in St. Joseph with our children, Tyler and Olivia. I am honored to be part

of an organization dedicated to feeding the hungry in our community.

I served nine years as a board member at the Benton Harbor/St. Joseph YMCA. That experience taught me how important it was to be involved and stay engaged, and not sit on the sidelines when it comes to giving back and helping others. I'm reminded of Matthew 25:40, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

I've recently had the opportunity to volunteer at the Soup Kitchen, joining the volunteers who come in every day to give their time and talents to serve the daily meal. It was rewarding to hear many of the guests saying "thank you" or "God bless you" when receiving their hot meal. Some guests just wanted to talk, to share a story with someone who would listen.

I realized the Soup Kitchen and its guests were having a profound effect on me, and how I live my life and spend time with my family. The Soup Kitchen is a unique place, unlike any other non-profit in the area.

*Rob*



## 2015 TABOR HILL DINNER COMING SOON!

Invites are already in the mail for our annual dinner at Tabor Hill in Buchanan. The date for this year's event is Sunday, April 26, from 4:00 to 7:00. Space is limited; don't delay. If you need more information on this event, please e-mail KC Gast at [kcgast@yahoo.com](mailto:kcgast@yahoo.com) or call the Soup Kitchen at 925-8204 and leave your e-mail address for a response. If you've not been a part of this event in the past, now's your chance!

## HARBOR SHORES GOLF OUTING



### 2015 GOLF OUTING AT HARBOR SHORES JUNE 22

Think Spring! We're already reserving slots for our 2015 fundraiser at Harbor Shores. Monday, June 22 at 1:00 we will tee off with a shotgun start and 4-man scramble. What a privilege to be able to play one of the best courses in the United States and to help raise money for the Soup Kitchen at the same time!

There will be two flights this year (A & B) with prizes for longest drive for both men and women, closest to the pin, and team low net for both flights. At 6:00, we will have a buffet under the tent (included in the package). Golf carts are also included. The cost is \$140.00 for each golfer in your foursome and to get a sign-up form for your group, please contact KC Gast by e-mail [kcgast@yahoo.com](mailto:kcgast@yahoo.com) as soon as possible. Space is limited to keep play moving quickly.

There are no rain dates. If the event doesn't occur due to weather, Harbor Shores will let your foursome play any time for the remainder of the year, at no charge.

You can't lose! Start practicing...scores at Harbor Shores get better every year. See you soon!



### 2015 SOUP BOWL AT KELLEY'S BOWL CALL IMMEDIATELY!

We may still have openings for teams (4 or 5 members) for the 29th Soup Bowl. We usually fill all 30 lanes, so don't delay! Contact Debbie Gillespie (926-4293) or call the office (925-8204) to see if there are any lanes available.



## SUPPORT, SUSTENANCE, SECOND CHANCES

Our Volunteers often ask why people come to the Soup Kitchen. Some people come to eat, and some to socialize. Others are here on their way to somewhere else, and some are finding themselves. This is one man's story.

Viktor's black hair is long and very straight. His clothes are neat and clean. He stands and moves apologetically; he's had a lot of practice apologizing. I was surprised that he spoke so honestly about his offenses. It was more surprising that he admitted to having been given many second chances, but that he used them the wrong way. He is not a man taking his first step out of trouble; he is well on his way.

Viktor's story: Escapism has been my problem. When I was younger, I would escape into books and movies. I first experienced marijuana at age 19; it was the most wonderful thing that ever happened to me. Drugs really enhance art. A few years later, to my shame, I introduced my 12-year-old brother to marijuana. He is in a mental hospital now.

After I got my master's degree, I taught English in a Korean University. A friend convinced me to go to Saudi Arabia to teach. We had a great time and made incredible amounts of money. After 3 months, I asked to be fired because I was depressed and using drugs. I returned to the USA to start a doctorate, but I didn't like the school, so started drinking to escape.

My friend and I started stealing liquor from stores in Berrien Springs. After we ran out of money, drugs, and alcohol, I broke into a store. It was easy, too easy, so I did it again. I was arrested for attempted assault and theft and immediately confessed to 7 felonies. For a first arrest, they only gave me 9 months, of which I served 6 ½. After that I had

4 months at KPEP and alcohol monitoring for 3 months. I got off easy, but I didn't appreciate it.

After two months I went back to jail for violating probation. Again I got out early because of being inmate worker. Then I was arrested for trespassing. I was sentenced to jail, but I had maxed out jail time, so I had to serve 5 months in prison. I lost two teeth because of using alcohol in prison. I got super drunk on my birthday. A guy was picking on me so I spit in his face. They knocked me down and stomped out two of my teeth. I don't remember it happening. At the end of the 5 months I got parole immediately, so here I am.

I do feel bad about the robberies. The store owners came to my sentencing. After I got out, they tried to help me by giving me a job. I thought, "That's incredible. Here they are, trying to help me."

As a kid, I got away with things like not turning in papers on time. I was the prize pupil, so they gave me a fee pass. Time after time I got away with it.

I was given help many times, but I didn't take it the right way. After a while, I started planning to take advantage. The good thing was that when I got in trouble with the police, that didn't work. So thank goodness it happened, or I would have gone on hurting others. It matters to me that my mother has two sons who are the black sheep of the family. My two uncles have helped me over and over, but I have exhausted my welcome.

I am doing better now. I go to substance abuse class every week. I get job help at Michigan Works, and I am on the SNAP program. I must do the right thing this time.



Dear Folks,  
Thank you so much for  
all you do for our needy  
Happy to support your  
efforts!  
God's beautiful blessings  
to you & the crew!  
Happy Eats! For Belle

With our gratitude and  
prayers for all your dedicated  
work.  
First Church of Christ, Scientist  
Benton Harbor



**SOUP KITCHEN STAFF**

**Left to right:** Ray Osborne (4 months,) Robert Lucas (1 year,) Barbara Blue (2 years,) and Randy Kling (4 years.) Barbara does dishes two days a week. Randy, Ray and Robert can do both the dishwasher and custodian jobs, and Randy is also the Assistant Director.

**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.

**SOUP KITCHEN DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE**

The Soup Kitchen is a non-profit, 501c(3) organization. Our mission is to feed a nutritious meal to the hungry. Donations to the Soup Kitchen are deductible to the full extent of the federal law. Please consult your tax advisor for further information on the tax benefits of your generous donation.

**FEEDING AMERICA WEST MICHIGAN**

Churches are automatically eligible to purchase food at 17 cents (or less) per pound, including food in #10 cans, from Feeding America West Michigan, 1488 E. Empire Ave., Benton Harbor. Unlike other organizations, churches are not required to be a 501c(3). Please think about shopping there first. For more information, contact Feeding America 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.

**BOARD MEMBERS:**

- Sue Bailey
- Jill Beach
- Rob Burgess
- KC Gast
- Debbie Gillespie
- Chris Heugel
- Bernice Mason
- Norm McPherson
- Andy Takacs
- Paula Vogie

