

**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 Benton Harbor  
**Soup Kitchen**

**Learn about the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen. Read all the newsletters. Donate any time. [www.soupk.org](http://www.soupk.org)**

**A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION • 269-925-8204 • Fall 2019 EDITION**

***Moving along, moving back up.  
The Soup Kitchen is a stop along the way.***



Don

Mike

When we first spoke, Don was living in the shelter because he lost his disability support. Don has many illnesses, so working is not possible for him. Even getting around can be a challenge. Don has a bicycle that he uses for support when he walks the three blocks to the Social Security building.

Don said, "I have a lot of appreciation for the Soup Kitchen. I respect what you do here, and I want to thank the ladies (and men) who come here to give us a meal every day. I give respect when respect is due. I trust the Soup Kitchen. I saw a lady use a thermometer to temp the food. I'd do more for myself, and I have a food stamp card, but I'm in the shelter, so I can't cook any food."

"I also like coming here because I like to talk with people. And I want to thank the Soup Kitchen for saving my bike. I had it stolen twice, so the Soup Kitchen lets me put it inside at night."

Don regained his disability benefits in early September and now has his own place to live in Buchanan.

Mike is living in the shelter for the same reason—waiting to regain disability support. A paperwork snafu sent his disability notices to a couple of old addresses, and his support was dropped. Without money, he lost his home.

Mike is a Benton Harbor native. He has had disability support since 2009. The doctors say that in another 10 years the disintegrating discs in his spine will confine him to a wheel chair. Mike said, "I have been to the Soup Kitchen before when I needed it. It has saved me from going hungry many, many times. Of course I'm coming here more now. The food is way top notch at the Soup Kitchen. I'd be happy to do anything I can to give back."

When we first talked, Mike was worried about losing his place in the shelter because his 90-day-limit was rapidly approaching. I haven't asked for the particulars, but Mike is still in the shelter. When someone really needs the assistance and is making every effort to get housing, shelters will usually extend their stay.

— *Merry Stover*  
Executive Director

## 2020 Soup Kitchen EVENTS — Mark Your Calendar Now!

**Food drive at Martin's Grocery Store, St Joe.** Saturday, October 19, 2019 from 10:00 to 4:00

**EUCHRE Tournament,** Livery Brewery, Sunday, January 26, 2020

**21st Annual SOUP BOWL,** Kelley's Bowl, Sunday, March 29, 2020

**Barbara Whitwam Memorial Dinner,** Bistro on the Boulevard, Sunday, April 26, 2020

**Golf Classic,** The Harbor Shores Golf Club, June 15, 2020

Look for more event information on our website and on Facebook.



We have several serving groups where two churches join to share the work. This photo shows some of the volunteers from St. Augustine of Canterbury and First Presbyterian, both from of Benton Harbor.

### ***Why do people come to the Soup Kitchen. ?***

Most guests fall into the following categories: 1) homeless 2) living below the poverty line 3) come here to see friends 5) stopping by to say thanks for past service.

So let's dig a little deeper. How does a person become homeless? If you are living in a place for free, you are considered homeless, whether it is a shelter or a friend's basement. If you are staying with a relative and s/he decides they don't want you there any more, you lose your home. People coming out of jail or prison often have no home to which to return. If they are lucky, they can get into a shelter. Some people coming out of prison are forced to live in a shelter, even if they have a home. Most people recently discharged from prison arrive here with only a small sack of clothes and a few personal belongings.

If the person had support from SSI or disability before being locked up, they have to start over to regain those benefits. The wait this time is shorter than the 3-5 years it usually takes to get disability support in the first place, but a quick turnaround would be six months.

So where are you then? A shelter does not have to keep a person for more than a month. The federal government only

pays a shelter to house a person for one month. Most do give them longer, but it is at the shelter's discretion. There are some "safe" times. Shelters cannot legally discharge a resident when the weather is dangerous enough to harm or kill a person. Most winter nights qualify for that, as do some excessively hot days.

Many people come here to eat to supplement the food they get from donations and state or federal support. Most of the older people only come near the end of the month when they are running short. We encourage them to come throughout the month so they don't get in a bind, but most choose not to.

Speaking of the older folks, many really do come here to see their friends. And we also have a large population of the mentally ill. This is one of the few places where they are welcome and where they are treated well. For many of them, this is their only social place.

One of the best reasons to come is to let us know how people are doing. Many of our guests say "thank you" every day, and many return to say thanks and let us know that they are doing better.

# BUCK HUNGER!

## You can help erase hunger by contributing **ONE DOLLAR.**

That's correct, we are asking for \$1. (You can give more if you wish.)  
Your one dollar will not do much by itself.  
But all of us together can make a real difference.

### WHAT?

- 1) We want all of Berrien county to understand that people here go hungry every day.
- 2) We want you to give \$1 to this campaign. **But we need you to do one more thing.** We want you to ask everyone know to join you and give \$1 too. Friends, family, club members, church members, co-workers ... everyone.

### HOW ? TEXT buckhunger to 71777 OR

**Paste this link into your browser: [igfn.us/vf/buckhunger](http://igfn.us/vf/buckhunger)**

You can also get there from links on our web site and Facebook pages.  
You can choose to be part of a group TEAM or make your own Team. For example, your church or work group can create a Team so you can work together.  
Don't give online? Take up a collection, put out a donation box, or make your own way.  
Think you can't? We had a 7th grader generate over \$200 worth of food in a school drive.  
What is stopping you?

### HELP? You bet. We have lots of help for you.

Would you like to have someone come to your group to do a talk?  
Need a poster?  
Need more information on hunger in our area, or information on the Soup Kitchen?  
Need us to print cards, handouts, or whatever for you?  
YES, we can do all of that!  
We can also share some ideas that others used to present Buck Hunger when we ran a mini-version of this campaign three years ago.

**WHEN?** October 1st through October 31st.

### IS THIS REALLY GOING TO DO ANY GOOD?

You bet. In the 47 groups who serve at the Soup Kitchen there are two churches with over 3,000 members. Then add the smaller churches. Then add large and small businesses, and schools ... you get the idea. There are a lot of people who already help the Soup Kitchen.  
**All of us working together can bring more help to those in need.**

**The STRENGTH of the Soup Kitchen is in the breadth of its support.**

**Over 950 different people volunteered at the Soup Kitchen last year.**

.....*Business underlies everything in our national life; including our spiritual life.*.....  
*Witness the fact that in the Lord's Prayer, the first petition is for daily bread.*  
*No one can worship God or love his neighbor on an empty stomach.*

[Woodrow Wilson](#)

## **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 PROGRAMS**

The Whirlpool Corporation matching gift program matches personal contributions of \$50 and up with dollars from the Whirlpool Foundation. Full-time, salaried and hourly U.S. Whirlpool employees and retirees are eligible. Please, if you are eligible for matching gifts, please take that opportunity. Private foundations must distribute five percent of the value of their net investment assets annually. As for most things involving the IRS, it is a bit more complicated than that, but 5% is close. So you are not imposing by requesting a matching gift. You are helping to direct money that they must donate. Because of your support, the Whirlpool Foundation is always one of our top five revenue sources. The Soup Kitchen office can email you the matching gifts form.

**The Thrivent Choice® program** is a charitable grant program that allows members to recommend where Thrivent Financial distributes a portion of its charitable grant funds each year.

Eligible members invited to direct Choice Dollars can recommend where Thrivent should distribute some of its charitable funds among thousands of enrolled 501(c) (3) nonprofit organizations, including The Soup Kitchen Inc. Visit [Thrivent.com/thriventchoice](http://Thrivent.com/thriventchoice) or ask your representative for more information.



Just 5 Days volunteers plus Howard and Merry. The group did yeoman work all week.



MMM... soup, sandwich, bread, salad, and Chocolate cream pie.

Guests had a blast with the donations from Neighbor to Neighbor. There was a Coach purse in there!



### **BOARD MEMBERS:**

Les Ashmore	Julee Laurent
Sharon Austin	Rob Romano
Rob Burgess	Alex Schaeffer
KC Gast	Andy Takacs
Debbie Gillespie	Chris Woodruff

## **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**