

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**

A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION • 269-925-8204 • Spring 2020 EDITION



40 Years and Counting

The Soup Kitchen is 40 years old as of March 8, 1980. The open house to introduce the new facility at 132 Water Street was held Sunday, March 9th.

The original Soup Kitchen served its first meals on Thanks-giving day, 1979, in a store on Territorial Avenue in Benton Harbor. The Soup Kitchen Inc. became a registered non-profit corporation on March 8th, 1980. At that time, the participating churches served three meals per week.

The start: fifteen churches banded together to help neighbors in need. The leader who organized and inspired people to start the Soup Kitchen was Sister Rita Valade, RSM, from the Catholic Community Center. About 50 guests ate at each service during the first year, making the yearly total 7,800.

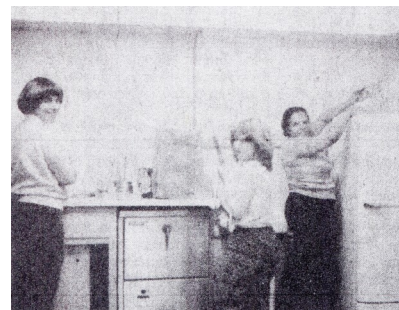
The first kitchen was at 132 water street in a space donated by Bob Carr and Dave Hanks of Incentive Investments. It boasted an entire commercial kitchen (triple-bowl sink, dishwasher, and gas stove) donated by Leila G. Post Hospital of Battle Creek.

When asked about the genesis of the Soup Kitchen, Sister Rita said, "There is no type of emergency meal program in the area that we are attempting to serve, namely, the Twin Cities and outlying areas. We feel strongly that hunger is a community problem. It is with this strong conviction that we

approach the community for assistance with this kitchen."

"It is not our jurisdiction to judge people," observed Sister Rita, "but it is our duty as Christians to feed the hungry. Visit the lonely, and serve the poor."

This photo shows a Sister Rita, Mary Shine and Barbara Davis straightening the kitchen for the Open House on Sunday, March 9th.



The crew on the right is finishing the walls and painting in the last steps before the kitchen opens. In the picture: Mary and Benjamin Shine and Sister Theresa Blaquiere, RSM.



of the clean-up detail. Mrs. Shine (right photo) works of the walls while son, Benjamin, helps with paint touch-up. Sister Theresa Blaquiere, RSM, of the Catholic Community Center, marks donated canned goods. Special staff reporter Mary Fassnacht, on hand to take pictures also helped in the clean-up.

Historic photos and information courtesy of "The Proclaimer" of March 7, 1980. Sister Rita Valade, now living in Detroit, dropped in for a visit last summer.

2020 Soup Kitchen EVENTS — Mark Your Calendar Now!

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

Benefit Dinner, Bistro on the Boulevard, Sunday, April 26, 2020

Past diners and donors will receive invitations in the mail in early March.

Please see page 3 of this newsletter for more information on the Memorial Dinner. ➡

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

Look for more event information on our website and Facebook.

Volunteer Becky Payne

Becky Payne joins the volunteers from Trinity Lutheran (Berrien Springs) on the first Thursday of every month to serve at the Soup Kitchen. Becky said, "I find it really rewarding. Breaking bread brings people together, and I enjoy talking with all the people." Becky likes cooking and baking, and has some restaurant experience.

Becky currently working as a court clerk in the Berrien County Courthouse. She gives up one of her days off to volunteer every month at the Soup Kitchen.

After law school, Becky had hoped to join the FBI. As luck would have it, she ran into a federal hiring freeze, so she joined the US Army instead. She served three years in Iraq as a Sergeant in the Military Police. Becky was involved in one large explosion in Iraq; she had to be brought by medivac to the United States for treatment of her injuries.

I asked Becky if giving up days off was a big sacrifice. She said, "I like to help." Before she ever came to the Soup Kitchen, Becky said that she had one big misconception about it. "I thought it would be impersonal. I know it is charity, but it feels like friends and family."



WHAT IS A BIG NUMBER?

Is 100,000 a big number? Or 200,000? Or 300,000? Or 400,000?

The Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen served over a half-million meals in the last 10 years. 500,000 plus.

Thank you to all the volunteers and donors who made this possible!

Annual Soup Kitchen Benefit Dinner at The Bistro on the Boulevard Restaurant on April 26

As in the past, invitation packets have been mailed to all previous diners and donors. The invitation packets include the formal invitation, a choice-of-menu card, and a return envelope. After you mail your menu card and donation check in the return envelope, The Bistro will call you to schedule your seating time and to confirm all details on both sides of your card. ***It is very important that you include your phone number!***

If you have not received your invitation or would like one mailed to you, call The Soup Kitchen at 925-8204 or email m@soupk.org.

All proceeds of this dinner go directly to The Soup Kitchen. You will be welcomed into the distinctive ambiance of The Bistro at your chosen dinner time between 4pm and 7pm. The donation remains at \$80 per person, and includes your choice of entrée, hors d'oeuvres, dessert, wine, beer and gratuity, with a cash bar for cocktails.

This Benefit Dinner is The Soup Kitchen's major fund-raising event of the year, and a time when we remember Barbara Whitwam for her many years of leadership and service for The Soup Kitchen. You are helping the Soup Kitchen stay open every day of the year to help those who need assistance. Last year, over 43,000 warm meals were served.



Chef Cheryl Bernacchi, the executive chef of the Bistro on the Boulevard, is the architect of our benefit dinner menu. Our Soup Kitchen supporters have given rave reviews to the food and the service at the Bistro every year.

Before settling in at the Bistro, Chef Cheryl spent a couple years apiece rejuvenating restaurants in Plymouth, IN, New Buffalo, Benton Harbor, and Union Pier. Chef Cheryl said, "my husband and I love St. Joseph and The Bistro was the right place at the right time."

The descriptions of Chef Cheryl's cuisine quite often use the words both "innovative" and "excellent." As diners at the Bistro know, new dishes and the flexibility of ordering lunch dishes at dinner time or creating your own menu from small plates have only enhanced their enjoyment of eating at the Bistro on the Boulevard.

The Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen: FORTY YEARS AND COUNTING

Our Soup Kitchen is staffed by volunteer groups of all types. Most groups donate the food for their day at the Soup Kitchen. Volunteers contribute over \$450,00 worth of labor every year. ***Without all of you, we would not exist.***

2020 Euchre Tournament Success!

On Sunday, January 26 the Soup Kitchen held what has become our wonderfully successful annual fundraiser, the Livery Euchre Tournament. Soup Kitchen Trustee Chris Woodruff was scrambling at the last minute to try and accommodate last minute walk-ins (which he amazingly did) for a total of 68 participants! Intensely competitive Euchre, great pizza, and a tremendous selection of beers--what else might one hope for on a football-less January afternoon? One of the neat features of this event has become getting to know people one might not otherwise meet; if you were one of these people (see more photos on Facebook,) thank you for your efforts in helping to raise dollars to feed the hungry of your community. See you again next year!



SOUP KITCHEN DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

The Soup Kitchen is a non-profit, 501(c)(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.

GIFTS of STOCK SHARES :

The Soup Kitchen can accept direct donation of stock shares. Please email m@soupk.org for more information.

The Thrivent Choice® program: 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 or ask your representative for more information.



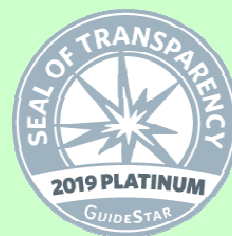
The volunteers above are from the Lake Michigan College chapter of Phi Theta Kappa. (That is the academic honor society for two-year colleges.) The aspiring ΦΘΚ member in the front row is Howard Carter's granddaughter.

June 15 Golf Outing at Harbor Shores

It's time to start thinking about getting a four-some together for one of the best area golf outings—the annual Soup Kitchen fundraiser (still only \$145 per person) at Harbor Shores. The 2020 Senior PGA Championship will have been over for three weeks and the course will be in beautiful shape, as always. In addition to a spectacular setting, we include state-of-the-art golf carts, prizes, and dinner. As always, all proceeds go to the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen. to get your e-vite, contact kcgast@yahoo.com. Get out and start playing soon, and we'll see you there.

The Soup Kitchen

has attained Guidestar's Platinum Seal of Transparency, the highest level ranking.



We hope that you will receive this newsletter by March 25th, the deadline to register for the 2020 Soup Bowl on March 29th. We will keep a wait list once all lanes are full, so don't hesitate to try. Register by texting "soupbowl" without quotes to 41444 or go online: igfn.us/form/yIskLQ .



Team Spirit winners from the 2018 Soup Bowl.

Food is a language, a way of communicating love and honoring tradition. It is something to be enjoyed and savored—and shared.

SOUP KITCHEN PRESENTATIONS

We would be honored to present The Soup Kitchen story to your organization. Please call or email today to schedule.