

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 • Summer 2020 EDITION



Above: Heather and Lori making watermelon cups for lunch. Many thanks to Classic Catering for their generous donation of cups, bags and boxes.



Al fresco lunch with friends at Soup Kitchen.



We are waiting for lunch service to start.

Dailylunch pickups are made on a bike, on foot, on a scooter, on a motorcycle, in a bus, or in a car. Many people eat here every day.



The World has Changed

*Soup Kitchen is still open daily,
but we have also changed.*

In our last newsletter, we shared stories and pictures about the beginnings of the Soup Kitchen 40 years ago. We also introduced our three upcoming fundraising events. The newsletter went to the printers about March 5th, then to the mailers, and was delivered around March 23rd.

By the time our newsletter reached you, the world was adjusting to a new reality. The first two Michigan cases of Covid-19 were declared on March 10th. By March 22, Michigan cases surpassed 1,000 and the death toll had risen to nine. On March 23rd, Governor Gretchen Whitmer issued a statewide stay-at-home order for all non-essential workers. Millions of people could not go to work, and most activities ground to a halt.

Since feeding the hungry is essential, Soup Kitchen workers and volunteers have kept on doing what we do. Some changes were positive. A normal trip from home, to the credit union, and then to The Soup Kitchen went from 29 minutes to 12.

As most of us waited at home, this mysterious new virus was busy demonstrating its superpower of being unbelievably contagious. We knew so little, and had to wait as researchers scrambled to catch up to the virus. There was no testing available at the outset. Health providers and patients were learning new things daily. While one person would fall deathly ill, the next person could be Covid-19 positive and have no symptoms at all.



One really hard-hit business sector was, and still is, hospitality. Gatherings and appointments were being cancelled by the thousands. Non-profits, including the Soup Kitchen, cancelled fundraising events and meetings.

The Soup Kitchen itself changed. We had closed the Soup Kitchen dining room a week before the lockdown. Employees and volunteers had to adjust to making sack lunches instead of hot lunches. Surprise! Sack lunches cost 1½ times more than hot lunches. As we changed from a dine-in restaurant to take-out only, we were kept busy learning about different foods and supplies available for sack lunches. We are fortunate that Gordon's Food Service has maintained good supplies of our necessary items from the start.

One very important group stepped up to help the Soup Kitchen in a big way. Even though our March newsletter carried no news of Covid-19, our donors made the connection and quickly responded with the largest Spring newsletter donation ever. Once again we say "Thank You!" to our volunteers and donors. We cannot do this without all of you.

Food Is Everybody!



Staying Healthy During Covid-19

The changes of our routines and worries brought on by the pandemic have forced changes on everyone. We hope you are doing the utmost personally to deter the virus by following the CDC guidance on social distancing, self-care, self-quarantine, and wearing cloth masks. In case you are wondering, masks and distancing in the Soup Kitchen are now required by the Health Department.

But then what? Here are some healthy suggestions.

- 1) **Get adequate sleep:** sleep is essential to our overall health. From the NIH: "Immune system activation alters sleep, and sleep affects the innate and adaptive arm of our body's defense system."
- 2) **2) Stay Active:** Your gym in Michigan is closed right now, but you can still find safe ways to exercise. *Move!* You will feel better.
- 3) **Eat a Healthy Diet.** Your nutrition is more important than ever in maintaining your immune system. Here are some healthy foods to include in your diet:
 - Nuts, pulses, and grains:** Almonds, Brazil nuts, Lentils, Oatmeal, Wheat germ
 - Fruits, vegetables, and Berries:** Broccoli, Apples, Kale, Blueberries, Avocados, Leafy green vegetables, Sweet potatoes
 - Fish, meat, and eggs:** Oily fish, Chicken, Eggs

It is important to have a balanced diet that does not focus on one specific type of food.
 *** *An occasional treat is OK!*
- 4) **Self-care:** Take time to take care of yourself. Relaxation, meditation, quality time with family, and personal care of yourself promotes overall wellness.
- 5) **Healthcare maintenance:** Keep in touch with your healthcare team. Maybe catch up on a screening or update your inoculations.
- 6) **Cope with stress:** Positive coping mechanisms include exercise, meditation, reading, further developing certain skills or hobbies, etc.
- 7) **Stay connected:** Reaching out to friends and faith while in isolation can help reduce anxiety and depression. If you are doing OK, check in on a friend or neighbor who is alone.

Read more ...

We have shared the general health guidelines above, along with some other articles, with Soup Kitchen guests and employees. You will find more healthy living articles on our website at:

www.soupk.org/newsletters/

From MSU: "Immune Supporting Fact Sheet"
 From Moceanic: "It's Not Just You"
 From the USDA: "Food Planning During the Corona Virus Epidemic"

The articles are PDF documents you can read online or download.

For those who would rather skip reading the fine points, below is an excellent graphical summary courtesy of the NIMH. More info on their website.

Coping with COVID-19

- Take breaks from the news
- Take care of your body
- Make time to unwind
- Connect with others
- Set goals and priorities
- Focus on the facts

nimh.nih.gov

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 Soup Kitchen

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



Meet Our Newest Employee— Claudette Johnson

Claudette volunteered at the Soup Kitchen for the three years before she became an employee, so she is nowhere new to our practices.

"I wasn't looking for a job, but I liked the Soup Kitchen and the kitchen work. I also understand the people and their moods. I was homeless before, when my husband threw me out. Then my daughter and I stayed with a cousin. There were no lights, no gas, no water, no nothing. Sometimes the people coming in have troubles like that."

"So I been liking the Soup Kitchen from the first. I like the work, the people...I like all of it."

Bistro Dinner Rescheduled!

Unfortunately our 2020 annual Benefit Dinner at the Bistro on the Boulevard was cancelled because of Covid-19. The happy news is that the Bistro and The Soup Kitchen are planning the next version to be held Sunday, April 25, 2021!

This benefit dinner event has been The Soup Kitchen's major fund-raiser since 2009. The donation is still \$80 per person. This exquisite experience includes hors d'oeuvres, entrée of choice, dessert,

wine, beer and gratuity, with a cash bar for cocktails.

Please join us for this grand meal in the gracious ambiance of the Bistro, located on the Bluff in St. Joseph, with its scenic view of Lake Michigan. The generosity of the Bistro family is notable, as they donate all proceeds directly to The Soup Kitchen. This event is always a remembrance of Barbara Whitwam and her many years of service to the guests of The Soup Kitchen, which traditionally has served as many as 60,000 lunches annually to those in need of a warm meal.

DO YOU KNOW

***That one in every seven Michigan residents struggles with hunger?
318,960 of them are children.***