

Brunch Update Issue 70 - May 2015

Sufi Service Committee of Boston

Addressing the most pressing needs of our community



Coralie was happy she could bring her kids, Nico and Manisha, to the shelter after finding out that kids were allowed at Brunch Service

Happenings

Over this past month, we reflected on the act of giving through the perspective of women and on the importance of volunteering at a young age. Many schools in the area have faced a common theme of charities denying underage volunteers based on legal concerns. These institutional barriers to



charity can prevent young people from engaging in service during the most crucial period of early



learning - the development of values that become ingrained in the mind and soul before socially conditioned biases are superimposed. Children and young adults who engage in service may grow up with less of a stigma towards those perceived as "other", and will be likely to carry values of selflessness into their future endeavors. The Sufi Service Committee is proud to be an environment that fosters the participation of young volunteers, bringing them to the complex challenges and joys of service.



Ultimately it is occasions of joy that bring meaning to our service. This past month we had the pleasure of celebrating Nowruz, the Persian New Year, with our friends at the residence. In the words of one of our volunteers, Dr. Nader Gandevani: "Nowruz is a messenger of hope and prosperity. It proclaims the victory of nature in spite of all hardship and darkness; it declares the triumph of spring over winter, hope over

despair, altruism over animosity and peace over war." In celebration of this event, volunteers prepared special food such as a traditional dish of fish and rice. Engaging in festivities creates a shared experience that blurs the lines between server and served, and works to break down the barriers of "otherness" that we must overcome in order to embrace the selfless.

Photos:

Chickpea fritter patties with grapes, pasta and tangerines

We celebrated Moh's birthday with a delicious vanilla and chocolate cake

Quotes of Note

"I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere admiration for the work you do. The service you provide has impacted the lives of the poor in such a positive way".

- Volunteer

"We are always happy when you guys are here."

- Resident

WOMEN IN CHARITY

Giving and caring are many times considered to be second nature for a woman. In fact in most communities, it is the women who lie at the heart - sharing their nurturing nature and inspiring others. Indeed, they are often a light that illuminates others, and gives them warmth.

In this world of many pressing needs, women find themselves on both sides of the spectrum as givers and receivers - acting from a place of compassion and inclusivity to address any vulnerability and also at times in most need of care and compassion.



Inevitably, there is a transformation or rite of passage most women must go through. Even in the initial careless and innocent days of youthful dreaming and thinking big, one is encouraged to think beyond oneself. One's formative years are spent being a helpful daughter, a caring and protective sister and a reliable friend.



At a young age, the responsibilities may seem high. Yet, as long as one is reinforced by encouragement from those around to be creative and bold, to take risks, and to find strength, one is made to feel equally appreciated and cherished. These roles can be a source of lifelong joy rather than affliction.

On the other hand, if instead of support a woman is made to feel shame, constraint and inadequacy, her growth and capacity to give may be impeded. These negative feelings of self-worth may prevent her

from believing in herself and in her ability to create impact. Later in life, in the absence of having this grounding, a woman may find it very overwhelming and draining to have others depend on her for their physical and emotional wellbeing - despite compassion and giving being her second nature.

Rumi, one of the most revered sufi saints, writes, "Woman is a ray of God. She is not just the earthly beloved; she is creative, not created". For women to truly live to their potential, to fully shine as these rays of God, and work as agents of harmony in society, the first act of charity must begin with themselves. They - we - must seek, foster and protect this light, our ability to give, to receive, to support and to celebrate others, be they men or women.

Photos:

Moh and Shakina glowing



Fruit is a necessary component of Brunch Service

Zaid surprises Moh with a birthday celebration



HOW TO GET INVOLVED



Manisha taking a rest

1. Volunteer! Sunday Brunch is a time commitment of only a few hours. Help us cook and clean or just spend time with our friends in need!

2. Monetary and in-kind donations: If you would like to make a contribution to the Sufi Service Committee Inc., you can write a check, use any credit card, or wire money through PayPal. We are always in need for milk, eggs, fruit, plastic bags, etc. for our Sunday Brunch. We also accept donations of clothes, household goods and furniture. Currently we need more clothes than household items. All donations are tax-deductible.

3. Drive! We need volunteers throughout the week to pick up bakery and food donations and deliver them to food pantries and shelters.

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