

Brunch Update

Issue 74 - September 2015

Sufi Service Committee of Boston

Addressing the most pressing needs of our community



John & Robin slice bread for the residents.

Happenings



Love muffins.

August was another active month at the SSC. Our “volunteers of the month” included Bill, Peter, John Barrett, Amy, Sherif, Stephanie, Zaid, Vera, Frank, Sahar (from Pakistan) and her “amazing husband” (Irish Iranian American!), Bijan, Dr. Gandevari, Mieko, Ariana, John, Jill, Kasha and Robin.



A mouthwatering chicken quiche.



Appleton Cafe is a generous donor.

Our chefs provided a variety of tasty and nutritious meals on Sundays, with menus that included teriyaki & barbecue chicken with peppers and broccoli; chili with ground beef; roasted chicken; salad; and Chinese rice with vegetables. One week Lisa (a six-year-old volunteer) cooked quiche and muffins for the residents! We also had our usual food items like fresh fruit (watermelon, bananas, tangerines), eggs, various juices, pastries, and iced drinks (which were very popular).



Pat meets Antony, Rosie's Place chef.



Peter's birthday - we celebrated with watermelon, cake, and eccentric dress shirts.

This past month also saw our weekly delivery of bread and pastries to Rosie's Place, a shelter for women and children in Boston. Mackenson Masse, the manager of Santander Bank, has continued to support us by placing our flyers at its prime location.

Finally, some very exciting news: on Friday, September 18th we will be conducting a Clothes Drive at Noor Oriental Rugs between 3:00 and 4:00 p.m., including a ribbon cutting ceremony by Cambridge Mayor David P. Maher. We invite all to attend and make a donation.

Quotes of Note

"For Sufi volunteers, help here is not an isolated event; it's a trend, a movement and a lifestyle." - Guest at shelter

"We cannot stop the winter or the summer from coming. We cannot stop the spring or the fall or make them other than what they are. They are gifts from the universe that we cannot refuse. But we can choose what we will contribute to life when each arrives." - Anonymous

Volunteer Reflection – Work and Community

Work is love made visible...

- Khalil Gibran

In my experience working in Pakistan with non-profits in the education and women empowerment fields, I have felt humbled by those who have dedicated their lives to service – even when their lives have been endangered. I see involvement in charitable activities as one of the purest forms of work. The staff and volunteers of cause-based organizations who relentlessly work towards healing and building communities are a consistent source of inspiration. Yet there are instances when I have found a disconnect between the spirit of those working and the change envisioned. In this regard, there are two things I have noticed with time.

Firstly, there can be a mismatch between the needs of communities and the efforts of an organization. In one case I saw how an organization did a tremendous job in fundraising to rebuild in disaster affected areas, only to build homes that were not suitable for living. The construction they chose, though modern, was not suited to the local climate and so ended up being underutilized. In the absence of input from the target communities, the organization's efforts were constrained. This example illustrates the importance of understanding the needs of a community firsthand before working towards a solution.



Quesadillas were served for the Volunteers Appreciation Breakfast.

Secondly, impact can be constrained if the leadership is not transferring the vision and empowering all those involved. I have seen the sustainability of charitable efforts is affected if those working together are out of sync. For example, I have heard stories of older staff feeling unappreciated or skeptical about change and younger volunteers feeling unwelcome or underutilized. Understandably the motivations and also expectations of those involved may be different. However, if leaders are deliberate about creating a supportive and enabling environment within their cause-based organization, then they build a culture of giving and learning that sustains.



As a volunteer with the Sufi Service Committee (SSC), I was impressed how the organization handled these two challenges described above. The SSC focuses primarily on the most pressing needs that are shared by its partner organizations and their target beneficiaries. In addition to its year-round food delivery and brunch activities, the SSC shows additional flexibility to meet seasonal needs creates further impact. One example is ensuring the homeless are adequately hydrated in the summer through

the water bottle campaign. Moreover, as a volunteer I have felt like an integral part of the activities from planning, to partaking in the service itself, and then sharing the highlights through activities like this newsletter. To top off everything, the love and elated spirits of those involved that really adds a very special touch to everybody's experience.

In conclusion, working to understand better and empower those around not only reinforces the sense of community but creates more joy and makes meaningful work even more rewarding.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED



Sahar serves with her husband Bijan.

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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