

# Brunch Update

Issue 87 - October 2016  
Sufi Service Committee of Boston

*Addressing the most pressing needs of our community*



*Vice-mayor Marc McGovern delivers the keynote address on behalf of Mayor Denise Simmons.*

## Happenings

One year after the inauguration of the Coat and Clothing Drive, and the Sufi Service Committee of Boston is as active as ever. Last week, Cambridge's Vice Mayor Marc McGovern, Bethel Temple of Belmont-Rabbi Jonathan Kraus, Handel and Haydn Society representative - Emily Yoder Reed, Stephen Blinn of Harvard University, MIT Emeritus Professor of Mathematics Steve Kleiman, Executive Director of Somerville Homeless Coalition- Mark Alston-Follansbee and many

dedicated core volunteers and supporters gathered at Noor Oriental Rugs to celebrate the past year's achievements.

The crowd met inside among beautiful Persian rugs to share tea and wisdom alike before the official event began. Many have been donors and volunteers for years, and have nothing but love and respect in their hearts for Mr. Mo Noorae, who has brought them all together under his mission to relieve people from poverty's hardships. His network is wide and far reaching, connecting friends of friends, interfaith communities, and people of all walks and ages.

The heart of the event took place outdoors. Stephen Blinn, a long-time volunteer, facilitated the speeches, starting with one of his own before introducing Bill Bumpus, another loyal member. Both men had quite a bit to say about the community formed through this volunteer work, and how much it means to continue the mission. They also shared thoughts and on how much the Sufi Service has grown since the Coat and Clothing Drive had opened last year. Next, Stephen introduced Mark Alston-Follansbee, Executive Director of the Somerville Homeless Coalition. He covered the history of homelessness prevention in the Boston area, which has been an uphill battle for the past 30 years. He addressed the fact that Boston area is in a "state of emergency" when it comes to hunger and homelessness, and that programs like the Sufi Service are some of the most important and necessary tools in combatting those injustices. He aptly stated that "if you fall into homelessness, it's much harder to get back out", which is why having access to clean and warm clothing, affordable housing, and food are as essential for people trying to stay off of the street.

Finally, Vice Mayor of Cambridge, Marc McGovern delivered the keynote address on behalf of Mayor Denise Simmons. Vice Mayor McGovern took a moment to note his presence at the inauguration of the donation box, and how he could not have predicted the immense, and tangible success it has had in just a year. As a former social worker, McGovern knows first hand what impoverished and homeless families struggle with on a daily basis. His message was clear; the most vulnerable members of society are the ones with the least power to change their conditions, and McGovern knows that "we have a responsibility as elected officials and citizens to work to make their lives better". He is currently working on a massive collaboration with all politicians from the Greater Boston Area, hoping to unite every borough in one comprehensive fight against homelessness. The Metro Boston Homeless Summit will fight to bring better policies not only to the Boston area, but the state of Massachusetts as a whole, including a \$15 minimum wage.

Following the speeches, Bill Bumpus and Michael Punzak treated us to their musical talents while small groups and pairs debriefed, and thanked the speakers for their time. Alston-Follansbee and McGovern each shared further details of their plans with interested volunteers, and their enthusiasm buzzed in the air long after the event ended. The problem is big, complicated, and difficult to tackle, but the key to success is and always has been generosity, collaboration, and most importantly, love.

-Rebecca Reibstein

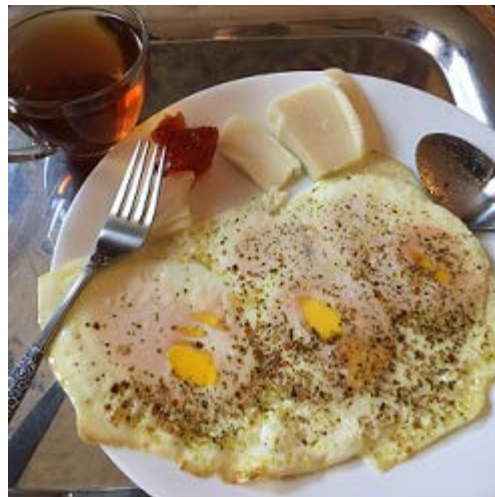


*Fruit arrangements.*

## Remarks by Bill Bumpus

In addition to our clothing distribution efforts, the Sufi Service Committee also collects donated bread, pastry, soups and sandwiches from local stores and restaurants for distribution at shelters/food pantries.

Over the last three years we've picked up and delivered more than 1000 donations, totaling more than 10,000 pounds of food. Our local donors include Pepperidge Farms, Whole Foods, Panera and Au Bon Pain, and among the recipients are Rosie's Place and St. Francis House in Boston, Project SOUP in Somerville, and the East End House and Margaret Fuller House in Cambridge.



We're always in need of additional volunteers to pick up and deliver food, so if you have a car and can spare a couple of hours a week, please let us know. This is an opportunity to make a small but significant contribution to homeless and low-income members of the community.

As always, I'd like to close my remarks with an egg joke:

Why don't eggs tell jokes?

Because they would crack each other up.

Thank you, and have a wonderful day.



*Fruit arrangements.*



*Stephen Blinn.*

## Remarks by Vice-Mayor Marc McGovern

Good morning. I would like to start by thanking Mo and everyone from the Sufi Service Committee. When I stood here with you last year I don't think any of thought that this project would be so successful. You have exceeded all expectations and I truly thank you for your time and commitment.



As we look around the Cambridge and Boston area these days, we see buildings and industry sprouting up around us. We see people and companies of great wealth coming to our neighborhoods. Our universities are thriving and we are the capital of innovation. Yet despite all this wealth and prosperity there are many in our community who are struggling. They are struggling to pay their rent. They are struggling to pay their bills, they are struggling to put food on the table and they are even struggling to clothe their children.

Many of us in government, like Mayor Simmons and myself, are doing what we can. We are trying to bring more affordable housing to Cambridge, looking at increasing the minimum wage, creating high quality, affordable early childhood education programs and strengthen our schools. But at the end of the day government can't do it alone and that is why what has been created here is so special.

So, I thank you all again for your amazing efforts and I pledge to continue to join you in making our community the socially and economically just community we all want it to be.



*Bill Bumpus and Michael Punzak playing violin and ukulele.*



*Fruit arrangements.*

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED



*Volunteers Bill, Peter, David, Cyrus, Tom & Mary, Michael, Aiden, Lorraine, Mo and Stephanie.*

Volunteers of all background are welcome to get involved by:

- Preparing and serving meals
- Donating and organizing clothes
- Providing administrative assistance
- Making financial contributions

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