

Brunch Update

Issue 90 - January 2017

Sufi Service Committee (Boston)

Addressing the most pressing needs of our community



Aiden, Ebi, Ann, Danny and Steve fold donated clothing at Noor Oriental Rugs

Quote of the Month

"Deep friendships are often made in unusual circumstances when people go beyond what is expected of them for the sake of one another."

-Dr. Alireza Nurbakhsh, Founder of Sufi Service Committee

Happenings

December saw a tremendous amount of clothes sorting for Sufi Service Committee and conveniently so, considering the winter season. For the first three Sundays of December, volunteers gathered at Noor Oriental Rugs to partake in the proprietor's delicious brunch servings as well as to sort donated clothes by age, gender, and size. The clothing donation project is of particular importance this month as many of the city's homeless are in dire straits due to the combination of homelessness and frigid weather. After sorting the clothes on the first Sunday of December, volunteers descended upon the streets of downtown Boston to distribute clothing for those in need.

Steve, Danny, Bill, Michael, Peter, Stephen, and Aiden were some of

the core volunteers of this charitable and praiseworthy endeavor. In addition to the clothes, they also sorted donated kitchenware, bedsheets, and toys. Steve provided some musical accompaniment on guitar to help while everyone worked. After sorting, volunteers took clothes, sheets, toys, and silverware to the corner of Mass Ave and Melnea Cass Boulevard, where another organization was running a soup kitchen. People were thrilled with the donations, particularly the blankets and jackets, which disappeared very quickly. Other involved organizations that day and throughout the month were Second Chances, Heading Home, and Housing Families.



Volunteers are welcomed by freshly brewed coffee

Andrea Shapiro of Second Chances commented,

"Thank you for your generosity and partnership. I am so grateful to you for working with Second Chances to support one of Somerville Homeless Coalitions' clients. Thank you for all that you do to help people in our community!"



Heather and Arielle of Heading Home commented after working with us:

"Your generosity is beyond words. Again, I cannot stress enough how great it is to have connected with you and all that you are doing! It is so appreciated!"



December also saw the continuation of our almost-daily deliveries of food to nearby food pantries and shelters. It is a pleasure to serve our great city of Boston.



A platter of asparagus, chickpeas, cheddar cheese, corn, carrots, brussels sprouts, roasted tomatoes, and pita bread at the House of Sufism

Correction:

The authorship of Happings in the November 2016 issue was mentioned in error. Mr. Mo Noorae was the actual author.



Brunch vegetable soup with olives, eggplant, potatoes, and more



Volunteers' breakfast - bananas, blackberries, jam, and cottage cheese

stepping outside of ourselves by Flora Lang

I believe charity is about an attempt to right imbalance. Our institutions are fraught with imbalances, tipped towards those who are either born with the road paved smooth before them or can afford to pay their way ahead. Some of us have the freedom to choose how to direct our own lives because we don't have to worry about where our next meal will come from or whether or not we'll sleep with a roof over our head. As individuals, we can try to combat this inequality by recognizing that we have the ability to choose to channel our time and energy outside of ourselves. In my life, I've observed how easy it can be to become absorbed in the sphere of the education system. Student life is so often focused on the self, on thinking about the future and our place in it, continuously working and making choices with self-development always at the forefront. As we face off with the great challenge of "what will we do with our lives?", we can lose perspective and forget how incredibly lucky we are to even have that choice.

Performing service is about stepping outside of ourselves, and choosing to devote our personal resources of time and energy to the greater picture. We have the ability to transfer our power of choice to others by relieving some of the stress in their lives. When individuals no longer have to struggle to provide for their needs, they have the opportunity to consider a broader array of paths for their future. Helping to alleviate hunger and homelessness has an impact beyond immediate relief, and the small ways we serve can reverberate through people's lives.

Despite the connotations of selflessness, however, charity can still be a personal endeavor. As much as it is about values and institutions of inequality, it is also about putting a face to an abstract idea and developing a personal connection. It can be easy to think of homelessness as a number and become overwhelmed by the seemingly insurmountable challenge of helping all of those affected. However, we must keep in perspective our own capacity for action and trust that the hours we commit to service add up to something greater.

The opportunity I found volunteering with the Sufi Service Committee (Boston) is a tangible way in which these values are manifested. Service at a local level establishes a community that would not be possible at a larger scale, because of the consistency and care of those who selflessly give their time and energy every Sunday afternoon.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED



The weekly bountiful donation of pastries from Appleton Cafe.

You are welcome to get involved by volunteering, making financial contributions, and donating gift cards for food.

Contact:
Mo Noorae
Sufi Service Committee (Boston)
84 Pembroke Street, Boston, MA 02118
(617) 938-3680

sufiserviceboston@gmail.com