

*June Brunch Update, 2013*



Clockwise from top: volunteers and staff busy serving the brunch; Finette saves dishes for the absentees; Andrea makes the chili.

*Contents*

June  
Updates, pg. 2



“What Gives Me  
Peace”, pg. 3

“When you don’t have a home, your greatest potential is not there; your mind is scattered. Once you have a home, you can get organized, you can pursue a future, you can make changes in your life to better yourself. What gives me peace is being able to pay for that living space.”

*- from the anonymous interview discussed on page 3*



Thanks to the generosity of The Danish Pastry House (Jane Smith pictured left) and Panera Bread, 2575 pieces of bread and pastries were distributed to various shelters or needy individuals on Washington Street, Shawmut, Harrison Ave. (Rosie’s Place) and Oak Street in Boston the week of June 30th.

## *What happened this June?*

This June, we celebrate the fourth anniversary of our weekly service to the homeless and low-income residents of Boston's South End. We find ourselves in the midst of a program that seems to organize itself and grow without any external forces. Weekly, we receive so many donations of food from local shops, our freezers are filled with bags of freshly baked pastries and breads. We have expanded our services to multiple local shelters, and each week, we are joined by a team of reliable and efficient volunteers. In the atmosphere, you can sense our devotion is to our friends, not to our own egos or political motivations.

This June, our volunteers included Ali, Firouzeh, Andrea, Charles, James, Daniel, Sherwin, Sydney, Yasin, Ned, Mohammad, and Ezra. Special 'thank you's to Edmund for making delicious coffee each week, Bill for bringing fruits and desserts, Jeremiah for making the salads, Mashaal for bringing milk and cream, and Peter for making delicious side dishes. The head chefs of the month provided a great range of entrees. Fazi brought barbecued chicken, cole slaw, and potato salad. Mary cooked Moroccan chicken with rice and a vegetarian dish of potato, olive, onion, and paprika. Andrea prepared chili and cornbread. Ali brought chicken, rice, and soup, and on the last Sunday of the month, Karen contributed pulled pork and potato rolls.



Some of the delicious dishes prepared this month by our amazing chefs (from left to right): barbecued chicken, lemon Moroccan chicken, chili, pulled pork.

In addition to food, we also like to provide a bit of entertainment. This month, Charles led friends and volunteers in participatory games, and Bill provided a couple of musical selections on the ukulele.

Dustin and Razz of Peace Production visited us at brunch to film and interview one of our volunteers for a documentary on service, psychological improvement, and spiritual healing called "The Last Shaman".

### *Some reactions from our friends:*

"Your wonderful company and your winning smile bring gourmet meals to our dining room!"

"You guys know we can't afford such a good meal."

"The service is professional."

"Some volunteers are too funny!"

"Your service is about sharing and caring, the true meaning of love."

A friend said that during their recent time in the hospital, "every Sunday I was thinking of you!"

## *“What Gives Me Peace”: Perspectives on the Experience of Homelessness*

Often when we speak of the homeless, we use the language of statistics rather than the language of the heart. Sometimes, it only serves to protect us from seeing the suffering around us. Other times, it’s a necessity; a single story cannot convey the vastness and seriousness of this problem. However, a single story, a well-told story of hardship or motivation or patience or faith, can drive the more privileged to action.

One of our volunteers offered to share his experiences finding long-term housing over the past few months. He spoke about how he ended up homeless: as an undocumented immigrant, it was hard to hold down jobs, and the everyday stress of unstable housing perpetuated the problem. Mr. Noorae offered this man a job and a place to stay. A few weeks after finding stable housing, he said, “right now, I see the world a bit differently.” He found that these opportunities, which so many take for granted, gave him not just safety, comfort, and peace of mind, but also space for personal growth. Now having a home, he said, “I have the freedom to collect myself and express my personality. It does something big for you. You just feel more confident... When you have your own place, you’re more at peace.”

The peace of stable housing allows him to focus on his long-term goals: gaining more formal education, starting a house-cleaning business, and making personal changes. “I’m starting to see a trend in what makes people very successful. Waking up very early, exercising, healthy diet — I see that with [Mr. Noorae], and that’s something I would love to attain.” It is very clear that he has already started to make these transitions. He is very obviously a leader, accomplishing what needs to be done efficiently, driving conversation and pulling in the people around him.

At the end of the informal interview, he said, “Every human being in this world has great potential, but they need a home to reach it. When you’re looking for the basic needs — food, shelter, personal hygiene — these things are consistently in your mind. You’re unable to express the gifts God has given you because you’re worried about the essentials. If you look at the trend of people who are successful and can give back to the community, they don’t really have to worry about these things. I want to have enough resources to help people. Those who are helping are so important.”

When asked why she was interested in our service, one of our chefs cited a "sense of community. I really wanted to make good food that tastes good, [and doing the] little things, extras makes it great. [Afterwards,] I was tired but *good tired*, excited about bringing good meals for others. It was my first time cooking for the homeless, but I cooked the same way as I would cooking for my own family.“ **If you’d like to contribute and see this community for yourself, here’s how to help:**

1: Volunteer! It is a time commitment of only two hours: 2-4 PM on Sundays. Help us cook and clean or just spend time with our friends!

2: Monetary donations: If you would like to make a contribution to the House of Sufism Charity Initiative, you can write a check (payable to KN), use any credit card, or wire money through PayPal. All your donations are tax-deductible.

*Contact Information for House of Sufism (Boston) / Khaniqah Nimatullahi (KN)*

Mohammad Noorae — 84 Pembroke Street, Boston, MA 02118 — (617) 536 0076  
nimatullahisufiorder@gmail.com — www.sufihouse.org