



Breaking Bread Newsletter

Feeding Bodies, Nourishing Spirits, Strengthening Communities

Spring 2023

Capuchin Soup
Kitchen



Volunteers Serve as Ambassadors of Mercy

Connected Through the Friars to the Heart of the Ministry

"It's essential that we have volunteers. We need them. This is not a luxury. They're not extra.

It's not; what are we going to do with people who want to volunteer? So, they're an absolute necessity, and there's a definite purpose. For volunteers, they become ambassadors in the soup kitchen. For some, it's been a really significant part of their life." -Br. Gary Wegner

Gary Wegner

Since the stock market crashed in 1929, Capuchin's Soup Kitchen has been serving the community in real and impactful ways for not just guests but also volunteers. Volunteers are essential to the ministries at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, and as Br. Gary Wegner said, "they're an absolute necessity." Volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and ages, whether individuals or groups from corporations, work in most ministries, with some volunteering for 20 to 30 years continually. Volunteers work on the service line at the soup kitchen, where guests receive meals, and in the kitchen, where meals are prepared.

The pull to continue to volunteer seems to run deeper into the heart of the ministries, where volunteers can provide their time to help others, build relationships, and feel purposeful. It isn't just the "do something good" reason that keeps volunteers coming back, but as Jeff, a volunteer at the soup kitchen, said, "Making a difference whether directly or indirectly."

While volunteers are essential to the operation of the ministries, they have been impacted personally by serving the community. Br. Gary has received, and continues to receive, letters from volunteers and said, "Some talk about how they remember walking with their mom or with grandma to the soup kitchen to volunteer" when they were younger.

Current volunteers feel the draw to help others because of the need in guests' lives. Robert, a volunteer for over three years, said there's a "paper-thin line between having the life situation to give back and to having the need [to receive help from the ministries]." He went on to say, "I feel like I'm a different me since having the opportunity to come here because it makes my week and is a small give-back."

The sense of community in volunteer work shows how relationships between the volunteers and guests are built and have lasted throughout the years. Volunteers impact guests' lives, but as they give their time, they also share their hearts. As a volunteer at Connor Kitchen said, "I think I've found my place," Alex, a volunteer soup kitchen, said, "The way some of the volunteers interact with guests and treat them is cool to see everyone come together."



▲ Volunteers work together on the food service line creating takeaway meals for guests.

WORKS OF MERCY

VOLUNTEERING RETURNS!

We are happy to welcome volunteers back to partner in ministry with us. There are some safety requirements and you can read them when you sign up. You can sign up for any of the opportunities below here:



<https://ofmcap.cc/CSK-Vol>

Capuchin Soup Kitchen – Meldrum location:

- Preparing food & trays for guests
- Wiping and sanitizing dining room tables and chairs
- Special events & projects

Capuchin Soup Kitchen – Conner location:

- Preparing food & trays for guests
- Wiping and sanitizing dining room tables and chairs
- Special events & projects

Capuchin Services Center:

- Sorting and organizing clothes
- Stocking and organizing food items
- Special events & projects

Rosa Parks Children & Youth Program:

- After school tutoring assistance
- Art therapy program assistance (no art skills required)
- Special Events & Seasonal Activities
- Volunteers are asked for a weekly commitment per academic semester



Volunteers Share Ministry's Impact

by Br. Gary Wegner, OFM Capuchin
Executive Director



I attended the National Catholic Education Association Convention in Atlantic City many years ago. As I checked into the hotel, the gentleman handling my reservation saw that I was a teacher at St. Lawrence Seminary. He looked up and said, "I'm a benefactor of St. Lawrence!" It didn't get me a room upgrade, but it was an incredible moment that put a face and gave a voice to one of our donors.

Last year, shortly before Thanksgiving, I received two letters that have stayed with me. An older woman had recently lost her husband, who had served as a police officer. She was dependent upon his pension. She apologized for the small amount; that was all she could afford. Although limited in what she could donate, she shared with me how as a young girl, she and her grandmother would walk several miles to the Soup Kitchen to volunteer. They walked to save the nickel that taking the trolley would cost. They served alongside Blessed Solanus with a generosity and gratitude that I am sure he recognized.



▲ Volunteers help the friars minister to the guests at Christmas & throughout the year.

The other letter was from a woman whose son had passed away. As a boy, he accompanied her to volunteer at the Soup Kitchen. Sadly, his life went off track, and he died too young and alone in his apartment. His mother was comforted when she found a Blessed Solanus

relic badge in his wallet. She knew their volunteering had made an impression, and he had died with Blessed Solanus nearby.

Not all stories shared by our volunteers are quite so dramatic. But, the opportunity to volunteer is

significant, as the stories reveal in this issue of Breaking Bread. Since coming to the Soup Kitchen, I have been pleased to know that Mark, one of my classmates from the St. Lawrence Class of 1976, volunteers at our Earthworks Urban Farm. A few months ago, one of my students from St. Lawrence brought his son and his son's Scout troop down to the Conner Kitchen to volunteer.

There are so many connections to make and remake by volunteering. Give it a try!

VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED



Volunteers Recruited & Trained by Coordinators

Many Programs Depend on Knowledgeable Volunteers

Just as volunteers are essential to Capuchin Soup Kitchen's ministries, Volunteer Coordinators, too, play an important role in facilitating the services provided to the community. They maintain volunteer schedules, run background checks, hold orientations and training, and ensure volunteers' experience is welcoming and smooth. They not only support the coordination of volunteers but also build relationships with volunteers so they feel welcome to come back and serve.

The coordinators understand the importance of volunteers to the community and nurture their relationships so the guests can receive services provided through the ministries. As Maxwell Morrison, Director of Volunteer Services, said, "The work of a Volunteer Coordinator is very layered." Maxwell continued to say that Volunteer Coordinators help "to empower a volunteer to do good within themselves, so you get to see that relationship grow and see the volunteers interact with guests."

Volunteer Coordinators ensure that volunteers are available for the many services the Capuchin Soup Kitchen provides and maintain the sign-up process. COVID has caused a decrease in volunteers, which requires more recruitment

work, but corporate groups are signing up to volunteer, and individuals are returning to serve more and more. Some build friendships with staff, fellow volunteers, and guests, and they want to come back time and time again. Alfrida and her husband, Glen, who volunteer at the service center, learned of the Capuchin Soup Kitchen's volunteer program through a friend and devote their time every Friday to help guests receive food and clothing. Alfrida said of their experience volunteering at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, "It feels good to help people, and I think we'll volunteer until we can't any longer." Maxwell said of those who maintain a regular volunteer schedule, "We are blessed to have a core group of regulars we can really rely on."



▲ Maxwell Morrison, Director of Volunteer Coordinators has developed background check, orientation and training programs for hundreds of volunteers.

Potential volunteers interested in serving any site can learn more about the volunteer programs and sign up online. First-time volunteers are provided an orientation, instructions for that day, and a follow-up afterward. If they would like to volunteer continually, a background check is completed, which is valid for all service sites. Some programs require an interview, background check, and special training before the initial volunteer time takes place.

Meet Our Volunteer Coordinators



▲ Djuna Barker serves as the Volunteer Coordinator for the Capuchin Services Center.



▲ Juanita McGhee serves as the Volunteer Coordinator at Conner Soup Kitchen.



▲ Rita Johnson serves as Volunteer Coordinator at Meldrum Soup Kitchen.

The Joy of Serving & Knowing

by Br. Tien Dinh OFM Capuchin
Assistant Executive Director



At the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, we rely on many generous volunteers who come and help us serve our guests. I remember my first-time volunteering as a candidate at the Capuchin



Soup Kitchen and thinking about joining the Capuchin Order. I did not know what to expect; I was young, nervous,

and afraid because I did not know what to do or how to interact with the guests at the soup kitchen. The good thing was that I was not alone, as other volunteers were there.

They took me under their wing and taught me what to do and how to interact with the guests. One of the more experienced volunteers told me, "It is good to serve the people

that come here, but it is even better to know the people that come here...when possible." As I continue my role at the Capuchin

Soup Kitchen, I am trying to serve the guests coming to our sites and try to know them, even if it is just their name.



Inflation & Shortages Hit Ministry

Just like our readers, the Capuchin Soup Kitchen is experiencing higher than normal food costs and frequent shortages of various items. According to Head Chef Alison Costello who oversees the Conner and Meldrum Meal Program sites, "Our weekly spending has doubled and there are fuel surcharges on invoices... even from local vendors."

Br. Rob Roemer leads the Capuchin Services Center where guests can choose food from the pantry, which is set up like a supermarket. There are times

when the vendors are out of stock of particular items, and Br. Rob said, "right now it's canned chicken and broccoli rice." That's when the local grocery stores are the source for these food items, though the costs may be higher.

Shortages and inflation contribute to the rise in costs, but Br. Rob and Alison work with the budgets set for the food items and have been able to still help to provide these resources to guests who need them. Your gift today will help us cope with these challenges while caring for all of our guests.

CAPUCHIN SOUP KITCHEN

CSK Conner Meal Site:
4390 Conner
Detroit, MI 48215
313-579-2100 ext. 4216

CSK Meldrum Meal Site:
1264 Meldrum
Detroit, MI 48207
313-579-2100 ext. 2205

Spiritual Care:
Offered at both CSK Conner & Meldrum Meal Program Sites
313-579-2100 ext. 2209

Capuchin Services Center:
6333 Medbury St
Detroit, MI 48211
313-925-1370

Rosa Parks Children and Youth Program:
4390 Conner
Detroit, MI 48215
313-579-2100 ext. 4224

On The Rise Bakery & Cafe:
1780 Mt Elliott St
Detroit, MI 48207
Phone: 313.922.8510

Earthworks Urban Farm:
1264 Meldrum St.
Detroit, MI 48207
313-579-2100 Ext. 2204

Jefferson House:
8311 E. Jefferson
Detroit, MI
313-331-8900



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