

Old St. Joseph's Church

Est. 1733 | Philadelphia's Jesuit Parish

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September 16, 2018 | Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Faith, Food and Friends Annual Report

The Faith, Food and Friends (FF&F) outreach program is an all-volunteer project that for thirty years has been a part of Old St. Joseph's response to the Gospel's call to feed the hungry and minister to the poor. A noon meal for men is prepared and served in Barbelin Hall on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays from late August through the following July, with short closings at Christmas and Easter. From August 2017 through July 2018, FF&F was open on 136 days, and our volunteers prepared and served approximately 6,474 meals.

Our core volunteer support comes from parishioners, neighbors and friends of the parish, with over fifty regular volunteers each week. Our volunteers typically help out one day per week, as their schedules permit. This year we have been delighted to welcome nine new volunteers to our ranks.

Other volunteers come to us from organizations with which FF&F has developed a special relationship. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, we are often joined by two or three Beneficial Bank staffers, who come in on their lunch hour, under the Bank's community service program, to help serve the noon meal. This year, St. Joseph's University provided seven student volunteers for one morning a week for a semester as part of a service learning class. We look forward to continuing this partnership in the coming academic year.

Guest attendance is limited to 63-70 guests to foster fellowship and community. Daily attendance usually runs between 50 and 60 guests, lower earlier in the month and increasing to full capacity

toward the end when guests may have exhausted their government assistance funds. Upon entering at 11:30 AM, the men help themselves to coffee or tea, choose a seat, and have some time to socialize before lunch is served. The meal is plated in the kitchen and



served restaurant style. Afterwards, the men bus their own tables and take care of all kitchen and dining hall clean up. FF&F's typical meal includes a soup course, a salad, a

main course (meat or other protein, a starch and a vegetable) and a dessert. Beverages include coffee, tea, milk, chocolate milk and water. Generous friends donate and serve special meals at different occasions throughout the year.

In addition to serving what our guests tell us are the best meals in town, FF&F provides the following support services for our guests:

- Spirituality Group: Following the Saturday meal, a spirituality discussion group is led on a rotating basis by Father Dougherty SJ or one of three volunteer discussion leaders.

—continued inside



Old St. Joseph's is equipped with an audio hearing loop. Switch on the T-coil function of your device to use the loop. Booklets with the Sunday readings are in the rear of the church.

- Mail: FF&F serves as a mail drop for guests who wish to use the Church's address as their legal mailing address. This may assist guests in obtaining housing, medical benefits and various forms of assistance.
- Toiletries and Socks: In daily distributions throughout the year, we have provided basic toiletry items (soap, shampoo, razors) and hundreds of pairs of new socks to our guests, thanks to the generosity of our volunteers and numerous parishioners.
- Clothing and Housewares: Although we do not maintain a formal clothing closet, thanks to various one-time donations, we have been able to provide clothing items and shoes to guests in need and miscellaneous linens and houseware to guests moving into new residences. We were also able to distribute gloves, scarves and hats during the winter months.

This year visitors to our program also provided the following to our guests:

- Assistance with voter registration;
- A presentation on the health care services available at the Mary Howard Health Center for the Homeless at 125 S. 9th Street, and
- A presentation by a Pennsylvania Hospital dietician on healthy eating and making good choices in selecting food.

On behalf of everyone connected with FF&F, I offer heartfelt thanks to Old St. Joseph's parish, staff and extended community for the many ways, large and small, in which you support FF&F and affirm and encourage its care for some of the least among us. None of this could happen without each and every FF&F volunteer's generosity and faithful and regular service. Our volunteers bring good cheer, camaraderie and joy in service every day to share with each other and our guests. I also wish to thank our guests and our hard-working guest/volunteers for sharing themselves, their perspectives, their struggles and their hopes and aspirations with all of us.

—Deborah Hluchan
Coordinator, Faith, Food and Friends