

Luke House

Community News

The Newsletter of The Community Meal Program
Madison, Wisconsin - Christmas 2016



Gratitude From A Guest

Dear Volunteers,

I want to thank you for each of your contributions to the meals I feel very fortunate to have received. I apologize for having delayed doing this, for not having said this sooner. Explaining how much your kindness has meant to me has required that I also revisit things that are painful and I have tended to put this off.

Being homeless involves a lot of challenges as I am sure you know. For me they included no support network, a chronic shortage of sleep, infrequent hygiene, having to plan ahead just to use the bathroom and having the simplest of things take longer to accomplish. In short, a hugely magnified focus on getting the basic necessities met, to the exclusion of all the rest that most people just take for granted.

At the top of the list of basic needs is food. No one get very far without it. Digging through dumpsters is hit and miss and not very pretty. You not only met my need for food, you provided terrific warm home cooked meals with all the extras. It was more than I could ever expect and it freed me up to focus on my other needs. Thank you. Without your help it really would have been unspeakable.

Out there I was subject to constant vulnerabilities and uncertainties. I never knew from day to day what new surprise I would have to deal with. Would I find a new place to sleep in the last minute, would it rain, would it be possible to

defeat the wind and thereby the wind chill, would I wake up with someone trying to get the wallet out of my pocket again, would some of my gear get stolen, would I have to fight to protect myself, would the authorities do something to make my life tougher, drunks at bar time, getting woken up by a camera flash in my face just for fun, the list goes on and on.

The one constant throughout this was the Meal Program. It was the same orderly thing each time. I could always rely on the Meal Program to be the one consistent thing in a sea of chaos. It is probably hard to really appreciate the impact and importance of this if you haven't experienced everything in your life being up for grabs, prone to being reshuffled without prior notice. Take my word for it. Being able to count on you was a big deal. Thanks for that.

And on the street I was acutely aware that seeing me made people uncomfortable. Different folks dealt with this differently. Some reacted with meanness, some pretended I didn't exist, and some felt so bad the once in a while gave me a little money or maybe the leftovers of their restaurant dinner. I was cursed, swore at, and had lit cigarette butts flicked at me. People spoke

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*“Faith in action is love –
and love in action is service.”
Saint Teresa of Calcutta*

... Continued from page 1

about me as if I wasn't there. I actually started to feel kind of like an animal.

At the meals I noticed things were different. I never felt like "one of them". I never felt that you were projecting something onto me. You would actually sit at the table with us or at the next table over. There might be some words exchanged but not always. We broke bread together and shared a meal.

You reduce the distance between us and somehow you were able to just bring your own humanity to the situation. And that tended to pull mine forward. Sometimes I was so preoccupied with other problems I may not have noticed this, but you persisted and it slowly seeped through. I remember at one point thinking that maybe I shouldn't completely give up on myself, after all. This too was a feeding and on a very fundamental level. Words don't express my gratitude.

So I hope and pray that throughout all this you too were "fed" in some way. It would only be right. And may God bless you.

*Sincerely,
Name Withheld*

Purchase BlitzenSchticks

We get lots of help from our neighbors and this year, ad agency **Planet Propaganda** and **Underground Meats** joined to create BlitzenSchticks – Merrily Seasoned Polish Pork Sticks.



Available for sale at the Underground Butcher and online at www.blitzenschticks.com, **all profits benefit The Luke House and our Community Meal Program.** Consider purchasing them to stuff your stockings!

Financial Help Needed

As we enter the Christmas season I want to thank all our volunteers for their service in 2016. Whether you came and enjoyed a meal, made, delivered or served food, cooked, cleaned, or donated clothing or other items, or you simply lent us your ear ... your service is greatly appreciated. So many of you have made service a part of your life. Each and every one of you have a tremendous impact on our guests.

With 2016 coming to a close I hope you'll consider supporting our ministry of hospitality financially too. The Community Meal Program receives no government funding. Whatever you can afford to give will help continue the hospitality we offer. Send us a note, or please give on line at www.lukehousemadison.org (click on "providing support.") Your tax-deductible gift will provide the help we need to serve people who look to The Community Meal Program for a nutritious meal in a dignified atmosphere. Thank you again for your continued ministry and support. I wish you all a very blessed Christmas!

*Sincerely,
Paul Ashe*

Pardon Our Dust

Thank you volunteers for putting up with our dust as you served our guests in 2016 while we replaced our well-worn floor, patched and painted our walls, and conducted routine building maintenance. It wasn't always easy serving and cleaning around the work. Your patience is appreciated!

Luke 2:10-13 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

Wish List Luke House Needs

Food

Rice, instant mashed potatoes, uncooked pasta & noodles, large cans of veggies & fruit, prepared meals, condiments, cooking oil spray.

Wearable Warmth

Gifts of new clothing, hats, gloves, scarves.

Cleaning Supplies

Bleach, laundry soap, dish washing soap.

Other Needed Items

Toilet tissue, bus tickets, stamps, Ice Melt for sidewalks.

& Your Prayers, Please

Please pray for the ministry of hospitality that is The Community Meal Program at Luke House and for the people who gather here to share meals.

***If you can help with any of our
Christmas-season needs, please call 256-6325 or
visit www.lukehousemadison.org.***

By the Numbers

As Luke House volunteers we have the gift of fellowship with The Community Meal Program guests. And, we also see some interesting stats come to life. Numbers that are not taken for granted and made possible by you. Did you know The Community Meal Program:

- Serves 80,000 to 100,000 meals a year
- Passed out about 40,000 pieces of fruit in 2016
- Uses 40 cases of napkins @ 6,000 per case each year
- Goes through 180 gallons of milk donated by people just like you each week
- Uses 90 loaves of bread every seven days
- Gratefully enjoys approximately 16,000 annual onsite volunteer hours!

We know ... and we love our opportunity to be a part of The Luke House and The Community Meals Program community. Join us if you can!

Luke 3:10-11 When all the people asked him, 'What must we do, then?' ... he answered, 'Anyone who has two coats must share with the one who has none, and anyone with something to eat must do the same.'

Cookies & Treats

Do you love to bake? If so we'd love two or three dozen of your holiday cookies, bars or candies to share with our guests. A plate of Christmas treats always brings a smile. Deliver yours to the Luke House in the days leading up to Christmas. We also serve lunch and dinner on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day so bring your treats to us as part of your celebration.

Christmas Meals

The Community Meal Program at Luke House serves special meals on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and New Year's Day. We need your help to provide the food, prepare the meals and serve our guests. If you can, please consider helping us during this time. The Christmas meals brighten the holidays for our guests who look to the Luke House for hospitality, warmth and holiday cheer.

LUKE HOUSE
310 S. Ingersoll St.
Madison, WI 53703

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The Board of Directors of Luke House Inc., a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, publishes Community News and runs The Community Meal Program at Luke House, 310 S. Ingersoll St. in Madison, Wis. Serving nine meals a week, The Community Meal Program works to serve the needs of low-income and homeless people in Madison and to bring people together in fellowship. We welcome your letters and comments. Write to get on our mailing list and let us know if you're moving so Community News can follow you. Write us at Luke House, 310 S. Ingersoll St., Madison, WI 53703, or call us at (608) 256-MEAL. Paul Ashe directs The Community Meal Program. The members of our Board of Directors are: Luke Bassuener (President), Ron Konkol, Laurel Kinoshian, Lindsey Lund, Ralph Middlecamp & M.J. Wiseman.