

Luke House

Community News

The Newsletter of The Community Meal Program
Madison, Wisconsin - Christmas 2017



A Happy Christmas Memory Created

Dear Luke House People,

I want to thank you for all the meals and kindness you have given me. Thanks for a place to come to have a warm meal, and in the process to get to feel a little nice. You have been a big help and a real blessing. I'm not sure I would have made it this far without you. And I also want to thank you for something else.

Mid-November this year I ran into a guy I know from being on the streets. After the normal, "Hey, what's up?" I asked what he thought he was going to do for Thanksgiving. His answer kind of stuck with me and started me thinking a bit.

He said, "Well, I will try to catch the meal at the Luke House." I understood. You make a wonderful home cooked kind of dinner that he was thankful for. I knew that his "try to catch..." didn't mean his social calendar might be too crowded to fit it in, but that being homeless means constant uncertainties. Lots of things could make him have to miss it, ranging from weather, health or injuries to broken boots or the shorter holiday bus schedule.

He explained, "The holiday meals at Luke House are always great," thought a moment and added with a big smile, "especially on Christmas!" We hung on that for a couple of beats and wished each other well. As we parted I started remembering. There was a time growing up when the Christmas Season was very special, almost magical. It was a cheerful celebration full of music, lights, and the fun of exchanging presents. But gradually, over time, things changed.

First, the season lost its glow. As the years passed it began to mean frustration and hassle, tension and

conflict. Letting my thoughts go this way was my own fault, but I came to dread the whole thing. Then homeless, without any support network, it became a new kind of worse. Cold, lonely, and no place to go whatsoever. I tried to ignore it, pretended it wasn't happening, and hoped it would be over soon.

Later that year, I heard on the streets about the meals at Luke House and started coming regularly. Around the later part of December there was an announcement about the holiday meal schedule. Great! Food, something to do and somewhere to go! And that's how I came to your first Christmas event.

I remember arriving early and being surprised how many people were already in line. Folks seemed a little more upbeat than usual. And, a kind of subtle

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Christmas Meals

The Luke House serves special meals on the holidays. We need your help to provide the food, prepare the meals and serve our guests. Consider helping us at this time. The holiday meals truly brighten the season for our guests who look to the Luke House for hospitality and holiday cheer. If you can help, please call Paul Ashe at 256-6325.

Mark 10:45 "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

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excitement and anticipation seemed to ripple up and down the line. Guys were going out of their way to invite parents with kids to get ahead of them in line.

As it started to get dark outside, the line began moving and we came into the entry area. There was a volunteer seating those ahead of us and a little wait for our turn. It was relaxed. No one felt desperate or worried there wouldn't be enough.

Looking into the dining room we could smell the aroma of the food, hear the sound of Christmas music in the background, and see some of the decorations. The lights were low and a soft glow shone through the doorway. The volunteers were dressed up in holiday outfits and smiling.

When it came our turn, we were seated and served a wonderful dinner complete with all the fixings. And we took turns getting up to help ourselves to even more food on a long side table. I was astounded how good it all was. The tables were really filling up with all those plates. There was more talking and laughter than I expected. Everyone was definitely in the holiday spirit, enjoying the company and the meal. And we really filled up on all the goodness.

People who aren't homeless should get to eat this well. And they should definitely get to feel the kindness and comfort of that room. On the way out, there were gifts of some useful and needed things we could take with us. We walked back out into the night with a special warmth in our hearts. It was a very human feeling. I like to feel that way.

I have been to several of your Christmas meals since. And when I think of the Christmas Season now, I think of Christmas meal at Luke House. You have put something back into my heart that was missing and for that I am grateful.

Things are beginning to look up a little for me. I can look ahead to maybe getting back on my feet. Going forward, though, I don't think anything will ever mean Christmas to me more than what you do.

Thank you for your Christmas Meal. I'm sure we will see each other. I am definitely going to try to make it.

*Sincerely,
Name Withheld*

One Way To Truly Give

This Thanksgiving brought the usual hustle and bustle: potato peeling, pie drop offs, many volunteers and much needed help. As the day drew near, a good friend of the Community Meal Program called me and asked if he could come to the Luke House on Thanksgiving. We had all the help we needed, but I said "of course." Sometimes around the holidays, the Luke House becomes a safe haven from grief or other sadness as much for the volunteers as for our guests. Thanksgiving arrived and I didn't see this particular volunteer. After sometime I spotted him. He was in the line to be seated to eat quietly talking with a guest. I know this volunteer well. He had other places to be and people to be with on the holiday yet he chose to quietly join us and share a meal. At the end of the meal he thanked us and went on his way. This long-time friend of the Luke House exhibited a level of humility that was so genuine. It struck me and I've thought about it often since. He gave of his presence, and the enjoyment of a meal. Another day I'm sure he'll come and work and he has been a gracious financial contributor. But this season, he gave humbly. I'm truly grateful. Thank you all for your continued ministry of hospitality and support. Have a very blessed Christmas!

*Sincerely,
Paul Ashe*

Purchase Up Nort' Poles

For the second year in a row our neighbors ad agency Planet Propaganda and Underground Meats joined to create meat sticks that benefit the Luke House. This year's Up Nort' Poles are for sale at the Underground Butcher on Williamson Street the week of December 11 (until they run out). \$10 for a pack of four poles. All profits benefit The Luke House and our Community Meal Program!



What's Needed

As we enter 2018 the Luke House needs the usual items: food, wearable warmth, cleaning supplies, toilet tissue, bus tickets, stamps and Ice Melt for sidewalks. We have perennial needs ... and if you are looking for a way to make a difference ... often time's its beneficial to do what you do best. There are ways to bring "you" to the Community Meal Program without you even being there.

The Meal Program can be a simple extension of your family's table. Join with a group and make your meal part of ours. One such volunteer makes our meatloaf. Each time she slices a piece for herself and although she is not with us for dinner, she sits in her kitchen and eats her piece ... and truly we are joined. The meal program has become an extension of her family's table. Another spends time helping with communications needs which can all be accomplished from remote. How we all use our resources to make a difference can be as individual as you. It can be simple, you don't even know how to cook. Serving the Community Meal Program can be a way of living out your faith and life sharing what you do best, your talents, your resources, and what is simply you.

Food

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

Wearable Warmth

New clothing, hats, gloves, scarves.

Cleaning Supplies

Bleach, laundry soap, dish washing soap.

Prayers

Pray for the Community Meal Program at the Luke House, for the people who gather here to share meals and for the ministry of hospitality.

Cookies & Treats

Attention all bakers. We'd love two or three dozen of your holiday cookies, bars or candies. Deliver them in the days leading up to Christmas.

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

New in 2017

2017 brought some changes to the Luke House. Among items to note is our new refrigerator. A three-door Traulsen. Our new appliance has an easy-to-use microprocessor control, LED interior lighting, and keeps our dairy mighty cold! The dining room saw new chairs and tables and a new floor, which we are working on as moisture has proved to be a challenge. Outside the building received new gutters helping correctly divert rain water runoff. We are grateful for these generous donations.



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, Lindsay Lund, Ralph Middlecamp & M.J. Wiseman.

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“Do not worry about what problems exist in the world – just respond to people’s needs ... We feel what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean, but that ocean would be less without that drop.”

Mother Teresa