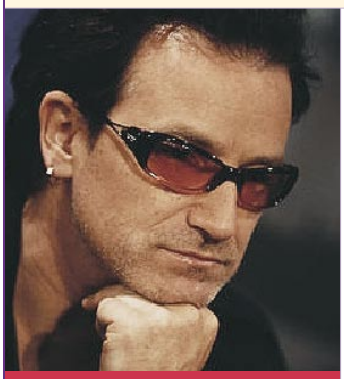
Trinity CAFE

Food for Thought



"A number of years ago, I met a wise man who changed my life. He said, stop asking God to bless what you're doing. Get involved in what God is doing – because it's already blessed. Well, God is with the poor. That, I believe, is what God is doing. And that is what he's calling us to do."

Bono

Lake Magdalene UMC Youth Group Loves Trinity Cafe

by Bob Blagg, Youth Director

We have been volunteering at Trinity Cafe for the last 2 ½ years. I remember the first time I brought 15 of our youth to serve the homeless. They were nervous and did not know what to expect because this was a first for all those involved. Well, it only took a few short minutes before the smiles came back and I witnessed 15 teenagers getting out of their "comfort zone" and serving with joy and appreciation. By the end of lunch, our youth were sitting with their new friends, talking and laughing. When we got back on our bus, the excitement continued and I was asked immediately when we were going back. We've been back numerous times since then and whenever the youth have a day off during the week, you can look for us spending time with our friends at Trinity Cafe.

Our youth-led praise and worship team has had the privilege of providing music at Trinity Cafe for the past couple of years around the holidays during lunch. Speaking selfishly, my Christmas season isn't complete until we have done that. The fulfillment we receive from that experience is something I can't express in words. To see how teenagers are changed by the experience of sharing something as simple as a warm meal and the gift of music makes the season truly about sharing God's love with others.

Thank you Trinity Cafe for showing our youth that outreach is rewarding, needed and everyone involved is blessed! May God continue to bless all who serve through this amazing ministry. †

A Non-Denominational Charity
Trinity Cafe is a 501(c)(3)
Not-For-Profit Organization
www.TrinityCafe.org

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Excellence, Generosity and Starfish

by Volunteer Coordinator, Tom Derzypolski

For the past two years, I've had the privilege of coordinating volunteers to help feed the hungry and the homeless at Trinity Cafe. During that time I've never refused an invitation to speak to a group about what our volunteers do to promote dignity and to serve our hungry and homeless neighbors in the Tampa area. Recently I visited St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church where Jo Ann Kohler was inspiring about a hundred teens to think about the responsibilities and obligations related to social justice. I was asked to present volunteer opportunities and to tell the Trinity Cafe story. I was most impressed with the approach that was used to tie in faith and good works. Not only did students receive an insight into the plight of the less fortunate, they were given an invitation to get involved and to include Trinity Cafe in one of their many service projects. I also had a similar speaking engagement at Crossroads Community United Methodist Church.

"What a difference a meal and a smile can make in the life of one person."

In May, my wife Lynda and I were invited to a community dinner and fellowship at Forest Hills Presbyterian Church to tell the Trinity Cafe story. It was a wonderful experience to see the generosity through a very giving community of service. Members of Forest Hills Presbyterian Church support the work at Trinity Cafe on several Mondays every month through their volunteer service.

It's difficult to understand the problem of hunger in our society of opulence until you spend an hour volunteering at Trinity Cafe and see what a difference a meal and a smile can make in the life of one person. At Trinity Cafe, we serve smiles, promote dignity and treat our guests as if they were guests in our homes.

I was also invited to give a presentation to the Tampa Bay Rotary Club. This dynamic group of community leaders generously supports the non-profit work that drives the need to feed those that are hungry.

Try to explain how feeding 200 hungry and homeless people each day impacts a community with upwards of 10,000 homeless. At Trinity Cafe, we feed one person at a time. Chef Alfred, a five-star culinary expert personally prepares each plate and expects nothing less than excellence. There are no "assembly line" approaches! Soup is not served until the guest is welcomed, and seated. There are periodic thermometer checks by the chef to make sure that each bowl is served at precisely his specifications.

Thinking about the five-star symbol of excellence, and the growing numbers of homeless and hungry people, I recalled a story that I heard about a youngster on a beach frantically picking up starfish and taking them back to the water. The currents and the tides made it impossible for the starfish to return to the water before dying. A nearby observer asked the youngster what difference it would make to save a few when the rest would perish. The youngster replied while gently holding a soon to be released starfish, "it will make a big difference to this one!"

Making a difference – one at a time.

I am grateful to be a member of the Trinity Cafe family. It is an organization that does things right and in a first-class way. There are never moments when the mission of Trinity Cafe dissolves. Every volunteer, every supporter, and every guest believes it. The mission is not preached. The mission is practiced. The experience our volunteers leave with at the end of serving lunch is not self-satisfaction, or feeling good. The experience becomes a permanent memory like saving one starfish at a time. †

Happy 6th Anniversary, Trinity Cafe!

On October 15, 2007, Trinity Cafe celebrated six years of service to the hungry in the Tampa Bay area. In the past year, we served 100,000 meals and reached the 400,000 milestone for meals served since we opened our doors in 2001. We have come a long way during this time due to the hard work and devotion of our numerous volunteers and donors who make this dream a reality. We are thankful for the opportunity to provide meals to those in need; and ask you to join our ongoing celebration by remembering Trinity Cafe, Chef Alfred Astl, and all our volunteers in your prayers. With your help, we will continue to grow in our ministry of providing nourishment to those in need with dignity and respect. †

Providing Hope – Wills And Bequests

In addition to volunteering, another way to ensure the continued growth of our program is to include a gift to Trinity Cafe in your will. By making a bequest to Trinity you will be providing a living legacy that will carry us forward with the growth of the mission we've worked so hard together to build. Bequests can be made in several formats; including naming Trinity Cafe as a beneficiary of your will, life insurance policy or retirement plan. Whichever method you choose, 100% goes directly to meet the needs of the hungry in our community. Please contact us to learn more about the options that are best for your situation. Inquiries should be directed to our development chair, Blain Sanford, at (813) 931-2551, ext. 108. †

Save The Date For Our Golf Tournament

The first annual FrankCrum Invitational golf tournament benefiting Trinity Cafe will take place Monday, February 25, 2008 at Belleair Country Club.

For information about available corporate sponsorships, or playing in the golf tournament, go to **www.professionalgolfevents.com** and click on Tournament Information & Registration or call Nettie Heffner at (727) 726-2786, ext. 2365. We look forward to seeing you there! †

Anniversary Photographs and Memories

The 400,000th Trinity Cafe guest receives a delicious lunch presented by Chef Alfred Astl and Sister Maureen Dorr.

Six incredible years and 400,151 meals later, warm smiles and loving service to others continue to be top priorities.

Ringo Littleton, giving his heart and much of his time, is in training to become Monday coordinator. Here he is celebrating Trinity Cafe's 6th anniversary.

An Opportunity To Give Back

Every once in a while someone comes along that exemplifies the meaning of service. Bronnel Barnes is that someone! Ask any of the guests or volunteers at Trinity Cafe about him and the response is always preceded with a big smile!

Born in North Carolina, Bronnel traveled the world while in the U.S. Air Force. Now retired, he says Trinity Cafe fills a void in his life that he cannot fully explain, and the fulfillment he gets as a volunteer is the most amazing experience of his life. Bronnel has volunteered four days a week for nearly two years, and is among the first to arrive and the last to leave.

Arriving at Trinity Cafe, he is greeted by people that have become his friends. Bronnel notices if someone is absent, welcomes new faces, and serves all – with care, patience, respect and dignity. He is noticeably missed on that occasional day that he goes out of town. His daily routine is to make sure that every table is set to his high standards. When the last guest leaves, Bronnel leads other volunteers through a calculated routine to make sure that everything is as perfect as possible for the hungry guests the next day. He leaves Trinity Cafe with a sense of accomplishment – he made a difference. He connected with people who were hungry when they arrived and not hungry when they left. They were treated with dignity, and all of the preparations that went into the day by the chef and his fellow volunteers came together in the life of one hungry person.

Bronnel is sincere in his convictions. Those who know him, who have been served by him, and who will meet him at Trinity Cafe tomorrow will see the fingerprints of someone who made a difference. Bronnel Barnes is a grateful volunteer who means every word when he says, "Trinity Cafe gives me an opportunity to give back." ✝

Signing Up To Volunteer Is Easy.

Any time, day or night, you can visit the www.trinitycafe.org Volunteer section. Use the interactive calendar to sign up for a convenient date that works for your schedule. Enter your name and email address, and we'll send you a reminder email a few days before your scheduled date so you'll know when to be there.

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