

*Café of Life has always and will always place
People First*

Café of Life brings people together. People with resources and a willingness to share them join together with people whose current circumstances find them in need of food, support and necessities. Café of Life fosters the opportunity for people to become productive members of society. This newsletter celebrates all of the people who bring life to Café of Life.

A Letter from the Chairman of the Board of Directors

Dear friends,

What a winter we have had! The many bitter cold days froze the crops. There was no work in the fields or packinghouses, which were the few remaining jobs in the area. As many as 200 hungry clients came to eat each day even when the temperatures dipped into the 30's. They sat on the railroad ties shivering as they waited for what may be the only hot meal of their day. They were happy to receive the blankets, jackets and sweaters that kind citizens brought, and wrapped a blanket around them while they waited. One kind volunteer brought hot chocolate and coffee to warm their hands and insides. The volunteers shivered too as they stood in the food line lovingly handing out a meal with a smile. Thank God for the resiliency of our volunteers, their positive attitudes and energy. We could not survive without them. But many wondered why we need to work in such adversity as they longingly looked at the empty community building nearby. Why can't the Café of Life find a building nearby where the clients and volunteers could keep warm?

This is also a concern of the Board of Directors who struggle to find a home in an area that is close to where the clients live so that they can easily come to eat and that the city will allow. Many caring people in the community are willing to help, if only we could find the location. Pray that we find a resolution for this problem.

Despite this disappointment our spirits remain high. We served over 30,000 meals with the help of 500 volunteers in 2009. We continue to find new ways to serve and to improve our operations with the help of so many caring people in our community. We are touched by the number of people who with love in their hearts help those less fortunate than themselves. Thank you for choosing the Café of Life as your mission. We are most grateful.

May God Bless You!
Marietta Bala

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2010 Issue



CARING... SHARING... SERVING

www.cafeoflife.org

*Café of Life, Inc.
P.O. Box 367794
Bonita Springs, FL 34136*

Introducing the people of Café of Life



*Volunteers serve an average of
150 clients daily.*



*This little client enjoys his
fresh fruit dessert.*



This client has a plateful.



*Can you smell this
delicious lasagna?*

Volunteers

With just two part-time employees, the Café of Life could not exist without volunteer help. We currently have over 500 individual volunteers who serve the poor and hungry. In addition to those volunteers, many churches, businesses, organizations and communities as well as our partners, contribute to the fulfillment of our mission. This January, we placed advertisements in two local newspapers to show the public how widespread the support of the Café of Life is in Bonita Springs, Estero, Fort Myers and Naples. We do, indeed, express our gratitude on behalf of our clients to all of the people who help others in so many ways. This message is important enough to express it again, here. We celebrate the people who help people at Café of Life...

A Time to Reflect. . . A Time to Care, Share, Serve. . . A Time to Express Gratitude

The greater Bonita Springs area has not been immune from the economic downturn confronting our nation. Often this adversity has extended beyond unemployment and home foreclosure – for too many it has brought hunger and a time of despair. Thanks to a responsive community these most unfortunate among us have not been forgotten!

The Café of Life provided more than 30,000 nutritious hot meals in 2009 served by more than 500 volunteers – made possible by the generosity of churches, organizations, businesses, and hundreds of people just like you! Our prayer is that the number of those facing hunger will lessen as we enter the New Year, but regardless, our community will once again stand ready to help. To all our benefactors named below – as well as countless individual contributors -- we express our most sincere appreciation. Thanks for continuing the mission of “caring, sharing, & serving.”

Business

Benson's Grocer
Bonita News Press
Bonita Springs Fire Department
Bonita Storage Inn
Buffalo Chips
Bugsaway
Coconut Point Ford
Coldwell Banker
Costco (Gulf Coast Town Center)
Costco (Naples)
Garth B. Mc Caffrey, D.D.S.
Farmer Mike's U-pick
Fresh Market
Gil Urick Design
Honey Baked Ham
Hyatt at Coconut Point
Naples Tomato
News Press of Bonita
Once Upon a Child
Publix
Royal Scoop
Smith & Co. LLP
Sneaky Pete's
Starbucks
Sweetbay
Toucan Grill (A Table Apart)
U. S. Postal Can Drive
Wachovia Bank

Partners

Amigo Center
Alcoholics Anonymous
Bonita Assistance
Catholic Charities
Family Health Centers
Harry Chapin Food Bank
Literacy Council
Salvation Army
United Way
Woman's Abuse Center of Naples

Organizations

Bonita Estero Area Realtors
Bonita Mother's Club
Bonita Newcomer's Club
Christian Brothers
City of Bonita Springs
Collier Harvest
Elks Lodge
Encore
Latin Club of Estero High School
Lion's Club of Bonita
Moose Lodge
Renaissance Group
Rotary Club
Woman's Club

Churches

Community Congregational Church
Estero Methodist Church
First Presbyterian Church of Bonita Springs

Gulf Shore Life Church
Hope Lutheran Church
Liberty Lighthouse Church
Living Waters Church
St. John the Evangelist Church
St. Leo's Catholic Church
St. Mary's Episcopal Church
United Methodist Church
Unity Church of Bonita
Wonder Years Pre-School at First
Presbyterian In Bonita

Communities

Bonita Bay
Caribbean Mobile Home Park
Citrus Park
Copperleaf
Lighthouse Bay
Lime Tree Park
Pelican Landing
Pelican Sound
Shadow Wood
Spanish Wells
Spring Run
The Club at the Strand
Village Walk
Worthington Country Club

“...whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25:40 – NIV)



Another Success Story!!!!

Rob Holloway, a supporter of the mission of Café of Life, has recently been purchasing rice & black beans once per week to supplement our pantry table. Recently he visited one of the area's supermarkets to purchase these items. He had placed his supply of rice & beans on the conveyor at one of the checkout stations when the lady cashier jokingly asked, "Have you left any rice & beans back in the aisle?" Rob replied, "There are a few still there." The lady cashier inquired, "May I ask you what you are going to do with all these packages of rice & beans?" Rob responded, "They are for the Café of Life pantry table." The lady replied, "THE CAFE OF LIFE IS A WONDERFUL ORGANIZATION. THEY REALLY HELPED ME WHEN I WAS HOMELESS -- I ATE MY LUNCHES THERE."

According to Rob, this lady is a younger person, and appears to now "have her life in order." Once again the Café of Life has made a difference for a former client.



Joanne Herrada

Many of you remember Joanne from past newsletters. She is the representative from the Salvation Army who has been a constant presence helping our clients and many others at the migrant worker camps for a number of years. This past year has been very difficult for Joanne and she has been plagued with health problems. She is currently recovering from major surgery and will be away from the Café for a 12 week period. Knowing Joanne, she will be tempted to return before she should. Please keep her in your prayers that she recovers completely and takes the time needed to get her health restored.

The Renaissance Group of Bonita Springs Announces Partnership With Café of Life



"Eat Your Heart Out Fridays in February"

The Renaissance Group, comprised of area citizens, has been active in recent years in spearheading the development of affordable workforce housing in the city. Moreover, the organization has taken a leadership role in the "Paint Your Heart Out" program to improve homes in the community. For four consecutive Fridays in February 2010, The Renaissance Group of Bonita Springs partnered with the Café of Life to provide hot, nutritious meals.

Dennis Wilkie, President of Renaissance, said, "The Café of Life is making a difference for many less fortunate individuals in our community and is in keeping with our guidelines for assistance. We hope our "Eat Your Heart Out Fridays in February" program will encourage other organizations to also partner with the Café of Life."

George (Randy) Riddle

After many years of service as a member of the Board of Directors, Randy has resigned for personal reasons. His insight and honesty have often kept the Café of Life Board on track and we will miss his input. We will still see Randy often and we value all his many contributions to the Café of Life.

Mary Ann Beattie

It was with great sadness that we had to say "good bye" to our volunteer coordinator, Mary Ann Beattie. She has been a wonderful Café employee and a favorite of all our volunteers. We will miss her and wish her Godspeed in her future endeavors.

Debbie LaRosa



Please join us in welcoming our new Volunteer Coordinator, Debbie LaRosa. She started working for the Café of Life on February 16, 2010 and is working diligently to learn the names and preferences of our wonderful volunteers. One person prepares vegetables, another prefers pasta, another meat dishes. It's quite a job to keep them all straight, but with Yadi's help, she is learning fast. Debbie will be assuming some of the accounting duties for the Café of Life since she has a background in the banking industry.

Debbie worked with underprivileged children in Massachusetts for nine years. She taught after school programs. She became a regular volunteer at Café of life and soon became right-hand woman to our Volunteer Coordinator. When Mary Ann Beattie found it necessary to leave the position, Debbie was the perfect fit to step in to the duties.



Café of Life, Inc.
P.O. Box 367794
Bonita Springs, FL 34136

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Café of Life

Newsletter Spring 2010

Café of Life Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide basic human needs to the very poor and hungry people of greater Bonita Springs, in a manner that preserves the dignity of the client in a respectful environment.

Café of life was Founded in 1998. In 2009, 506 Café of Life volunteers prepared and served more than 30,000 meals made possible by the generosity of churches, organizations, businesses, and individual contributions. Meals are served under the banyan tree on Old U.S. 41 in downtown Bonita Springs Monday through Friday from 10:30 A. M. until noon.

Café of Life Contact Information

For donations to or information about *Café of Life*
Call (239) 495-9325
Our mailing address is:
Café of Life, Inc.
P.O. Box 367794, Bonita Springs, FL 34136

*Café of Life is a 501(c)3 tax exempt organization.
Your gift is tax-deductible to the full extent permitted
by law.*

Visit us at Café of Life's Website
www.cafeoflife.org

