



CARING... SHARING... SERVING

A HARVEST OF LOVE

THE CAFE OF LIFE INC.

FALL 2022

Marietta Bala, Board Chairwomen: A Harvest of Love

Dear Friends,

Fall is the time of year to harvest produce cultivated from seeds that are sown and lovingly cared for throughout the year. The Café of Life has its own “harvest time.” People request services and we respond. The more we give, the more we get and the more we get the more we expand and grow. Like the seed planted in the soil, the more we sow, the greater the harvest. It is the generous giving of ourselves that produces the generous harvest. We experience God when we use our gifts in service to others and we feel blessed.

Physically, we nourish the body by feeding hungry children and families at the site and outreach communities. The weekend provides families a take-home chicken meal, healthy snack packets for infants and toddlers, and snacks in a backpack for school children. Clothing, hygiene and other essentials are also provided. During home visits we promote love and respect to the elderly while providing food and basic needs to help them live a dignified life. Client medical needs are met by having a mobile medical unit come twice monthly to provide medical services. A dental hygiene program is planned to teach healthy dental care.



Our goal is to not only fulfill physical needs but to empower people to become self-sufficient and ultimately inspire them to help others. Many clients give back by volunteering in our programs. Men and women have opportunities for a better life through enrichment classes in literacy, financial skills, an online high school diploma program as well as the women’s sewing, gardening and nutrition classes that keep families healthy. Children develop new skills, creativity, self esteem and confidence through our many programs for them that include sponsorships in camps, swim and tutoring programs. Three students are receiving aid to advance their post-secondary education.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

We give thanks to the Lord for our volunteers and community partners. We could not do this life changing work without them. We thank our donors for their generous support and for their faith in us to do God’s work. Together we can make a difference!

With Blessings and Thankfulness,

Marietta Bala, Chairperson
Board of Directors, Café of Life

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

Galatians 6:9



FOOD PROGRAMS



Farmer Mike's U Pick Donations



Take-Home Food Pantry Items from Various Community Food Drives



Fresh Market Daily Donations

The Café now offers many food distribution programs thanks to the terrific support of the community. We are best known for our daily hot meal service which includes a robust take-home food pantry with donated items from Fresh Market, Farmer Mike's U Pick and food drives conducted by many gated communities, churches, and businesses, as well as, individuals. To assist families with food over the weekend, the Café distributes each Friday

a frozen chicken, rice and beans, along with many sandwiches. But this is just the start; our Outreach Program conducts weekly food distribution to thirty plus families at each of several low-income neighborhoods/camps. It also provides bi-monthly fresh produce and dairy items to our senior clients. The Café provides healthy snacks designed specifically for

young children weekly, and sponsors 300 local children each Friday through an in-school weekend food program. Through our partnership with St. Vincent DePaul of Naples we coordinate and host monthly a weekend mobile food pantry. We couldn't do all this without the support of our generous and dedicated donors and volunteers – THANK YOU!!



Every Friday Frozen Chicken, Rice and Beans for Each Family



St. Vincent DePaul of Naples Monthly Food Pantry



Outreach Every Wednesday to Various Neighborhoods/Camps



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Every Other Week Dairy and Produce for Senior Clients



Sponsoring 300 Children from Bonita Schools for a Weekend Food Nutritional Program

BACK TO SCHOOL EVENT

Our July's Back to School event was a big success thanks to supporters: the West Bay community, the Palmira community, Premier Mobile Health Services, Alliance for Period Supplies of SWFL, Lee County Sheriff's Office, Herc Rentals and lots of volunteers.

The Café provided 250+ backpacks, most with school uniforms, socks, underwear and all with school supplies. It's a huge endeavor to sign everyone up, shop for each individual child, assemble and distribute, and its the Cafe's supporters who make it happen.



HURRICANE IAN

Hurricane Ian had both an immediate and long-lasting impact on our community and the Café of Life is doing all it can to help those impacted. We thank our supporters who are really stepping up by volunteering and providing financial donations. The low-income neighborhoods we traditionally support were not significantly impacted by wind or water, but have lost income as many employers are closed due to damages. The Café has identified a couple of low-income areas just north of us which were hit hard and we are partnering with agencies to provide assistance to them. Donors have provided lots of bedding, towels and clothing to support the cause.



CLIENT STORY - JESSICA

Jessica is a second-year student at Florida Southwestern College studying towards her goal of becoming a nurse. Besides being a full-time student with good grades (3.69 GPA), she works 12 hours shift at NCH as a CNA. The nurses describe her as a compassionate caring person who is thoughtful and kind to her patients. She is always willing to help, yet can manage her time to accomplish all of her tasks. She is exceptionally good at her job and will make a great nurse. The scholarship the Cafe has provided will help her get there. The following was written by Jessica

"Dear Cafe of Life, I am writing to thank you for your generous scholarship. I was very happy and appreciative to learn that I was selected as the recipient. I am a CNA for now hoping to pursue a career in nursing. I am attending FSW and currently taking my general courses. Thanks to you, I am one step closer to that goal. By awarding me this scholarship, you have allowed me to focus more in school. I hope one day I will be able to help students achieve their goals just as you helped me." Sincerely, Jessica



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HEALTH CARE INITIATIVES

Our population has very limited access to health care which has challenged us to seek opportunities to mitigate this. With help from United Way, we were introduced to Premier Mobile Health Service (a fellow United Way Partner Agency) and over the last few months have built a partnership which provides primary health services from an RV twice a month at our feeding site. Additionally, we are developing a dental program focused on education and access to primary care by partnering with Family Health Centers.



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The Café of Life is a faith-based organization believing in the teaching of all great religions that one must love and assist one's neighbor in time of need. The Café is not affiliated with any particular religion or denomination. Our mission is to provide basic human needs to the very poor and hungry people of the Bonita Springs area in a manner that preserves the dignity of the client in a respectful environment and to enrich and empower people to be all that they can be.

The Café of Life, Inc. is a registered 501(C)(3) tax exempt organization. Your gifts to the Café are tax-deductible to the full extent permitted by law.

