



The Newsletter from
Sophia's Kitchen
103 S. Richard Pryor Place
Peoria, IL
CatholicPeoria.com

Notes From the Kitchen

Summer 2022

Did you know?

- Sophia's Kitchen is a mission of St. Joseph Catholic Church.
- We feed 200 to 300 people daily
- We never turn down those in need
- All our meals are made fresh
- We love our furry friends too! Every Thursday afternoon, we hold a pet food pantry.

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Gratitude

Thank you!

It's a phrase we hear at Sophia's Kitchen all day long. Guest after guest will go out of their way to come back after they have eaten to tell us again how grateful they are for the good food.

Volunteers report having been stopped in grocery stores or other places by excited guests who recognize them and insist on telling everyone nearby how wonderful Sophia's Kitchen is.

These days, most of the thank you's are coming from our own volunteers who have begun serving in the dining room as we have reopened the Spiritual Center. A few served before COVID, but many are new to the position, and have entered a bit unsure. As their first shifts ended, however, all trepidation is gone. "That was amazing!", they tell me. They have sat at tables with people they would never have interacted with before, and

listened to fascinating life stories of survival and faith. They are learning to pray in deeply spiritual ways from our guests who walk daily with the Lord.

We are all so very grateful for the support given by YOU! Any time Sophia's Kitchen has a need, you step up to help us fill it. Often that happens before the prayer even leaves my mind! You are a daily reminder that God is good, all the time!

From Claire's Desk...

I'm beginning to plan for our next Spoonful fundraiser. We had so much fun last year, and wow, were those soups delicious!

Dates are still being finalized, but you'll want to join us in September for bowl painting and soup pick up in October.

The bowls make great Christmas gifts, and I was so glad to have soup in the freezer when sickness arrived in January. I'm sure it was the love in them that made me feel so much better!

Be sure to watch for our flyer and announcements on Facebook.

July always brings our namesake Sophia to mind. A car accident tragically ended her life much too soon. Donations made in her memory made the beginnings of Sophia's Kitchen a reality, and we are grateful to her family for sharing her legacy. Let perpetual light shine upon her.

Freezer

One of our spare freezers stopped working. SIGH! We were able to salvage all of the food, thankfully, but this leaves us without enough storage for much of the food.

I've done a quick web search, and did a big GULP at the \$1,000 price tag to replace it. This freezer has been a little workhorse for us, holding lots of extra food for our

pantry. In the summer, it's usually packed with freezer pops to help keep everyone cool.

It's hard to justify spending that kind of money on an "extra", but we have come to depend on this unit. Any help towards this expense is welcome!

Prayers

The reason Sophia's Kitchen is so successful is the wonderful volunteers who grace our kitchen and share time, talents and wisdom. Without their efforts, we couldn't make this mission work!

Prayers are needed for one special volunteer, Steve, who is battling cancer. Lord, free him from pain and give him peace.

RECIPE

Annie's Extraordinary Salad

Layer in a large bowl:

Romaine lettuce, chopped
Grilled asparagus tips
Sweet corn
Tomatoes
Black olives, sliced
Cucumbers, diced
Grilled chicken
Parmesan cheese to cover all

Add your choice of salad dressing.

"Guys! It is SO GOOD!!"

Annie volunteers every morning at Sophia's Kitchen. She is Sr. Merlinda's sous chef, chopping and dicing vegetables and helping with recipes.



Pantry

Her hug was so tight, I could feel her heartbeat. She began sobbing so hard it felt like her frail ribs would break. "You don't know what this means!" She dried her tears, filled her arms with groceries and steeled herself before leaving. May she have enough today. May her life be filled with kind people. May she find tomorrow to be kinder, and fuller, and easier.

Donations are always welcome for our Friday Pantry. All non-perishable foods are helpful - canned fruits and vegetables, rice and grains, cereals, spices and canned milk. Think healthy - low sodium and low sugar help people struggling with health issues. No glass please. Donations can be dropped off at 105 N Richard Pryor Place Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 3 PM.

New Address

Sophia's Kitchen is still in the same location, but we have a new address!

Since the kitchen opened, we have been "borrowing" the

address of Sacred Heart Church or the rectory next door. Recently, we were able to re-establish the original address of this building, and install a secure mailbox. All mail can now be directed to:

Sophia's Kitchen
105 N Richard Pryor Place
Peoria, IL 61605

Our Spiritual Center is once again open for guests to come in and relax while they eat.

Volunteers help keep the room neat and pray with our guests. It's great to once again have laughter and many interesting conversations floating about the room!

One young momma comes with her own children and several nieces and nephews. To have a safe place to sit at

Spiritual Center Open

a table with her young charges is quite a blessing to her. We make sure *Veggie Tales* is playing on the DVR and lunch is a peaceful time for her.



It's a room where the broken know there will be someone who genuinely cares, where they can once again find hope. Bellies are filled, tears are dried, and plans are made to begin again. What a beautiful place!

This space is always busy. We also host Prairie State Legal, Goodwill, Pet Food Pantry, Friday Food Pantry, and nursing students. So much love!

Faith In Action



Friday Food Pantry helpers

Friday Food Pantry is going smooth with the help of all our teen volunteers! These students are getting service hours for school while they help set up, sort groceries, and assist our guests as they shop. With the dining room closing at 11 AM, this gives them just 2 hours to set everything up to make the pantry run smooth. They are doing a great job!

The Pantry is client-choice, meaning guests shop for their own groceries from what we have available. Not only does this give them dignity in being able to make their own choices, but it also reduces waste, since they get what their family really wants.

Donate on-line at
CatholicPeoria.com
 or mail donations to:
 Sophia's Kitchen
 105 N Richard Pryor Place
 Peoria, IL 61605



In the Spirit of Saint Francis and true to the foundation began by the Friars Minor, Sophia's Kitchen is an outreach of Sacred Heart Parish.

All donations are tax deductible and are used exclusively for the needs of this ministry to the hungry of Peoria.

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Courtney Curtis
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CatholicPeoria.Com

Feeding The Poor in The USA

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

“Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”

Shortages continue

Do you remember the little ballerina twirling on the music box? She was so graceful and pretty and always swayed in time with the music.

Navigating a pandemic supply chain has us feeling like that little ballerina, endlessly twirling as we try to dance our way around to the same song each week. Backorders, limited supplies and shortages of workers are leaving us breathless.

Every week, there seems to be something else we have trouble ordering for the kitchen. Soup bowls with matching lids, peanut butter, and sliced bread are difficult to get on an ongoing basis.

Other items have dramatically risen in price, like aluminum foil sheets and jelly.

This Spring, a round of Flu and COVID left us short of volunteers. The remaining volunteers worked extra hard keeping up with what needed to be done.

Your prayers, donations and kind words carry us through. Our tiaras are a bit crooked, and our tutus might be ruffled, but we are still twirling away and some days do it with great grace! Thank you for all your support!

Mission Statement

As a mission of the Heart of Peoria Catholic Community, Sophia's Kitchen believes in providing nourishment to those most in need through food for the day, support for their health needs and spiritual guidance for their everlasting souls.

Almighty Father, help us love and serve those who are hungry. Use us to feed their souls and bodies, in accordance with the teachings of God's Holy Church. We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen

