



The Newsletter from  
Sophia's Kitchen  
105 N. Richard Pryor Place  
Peoria, IL 61605  
CatholicPeoria.com

### Did you know?

- Sophia's Kitchen is a mission of Heart of Peoria Catholic Community.
- 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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# Notes From the Kitchen

Summer 2023

## Homeless

*50% of Homeless will find housing in 2 weeks.*

*40% of Homeless will find housing within 2 weeks to a year.*

*10% are chronically homeless, with no home after one year.*

Have you ever thought that some people just don't want to work and prefer to be homeless? I know I've said it myself. Some of our guests have the resources and family to get shelter, but refuse. It seems like a choice, but is it really?

Ryan Dowd, of HomelessTraining.com offers a better point of view. Studies show that 37% of the chronically homeless are mentally ill with bipolar or schizophrenia. Another 53% have traumatic brain injury and a full 100% suffer from trauma, PTSD.

These souls are hurting. They don't function like we do because they can't. What should we do about them?

At Sophia's Kitchen, we feed them. We treat them like people. We give them compassion. We don't ask for proof of income, proof of need or even an ID. If

you come to our window and say you are hungry, we give you food. We give you a tomorrow.

Join us in prayer:

*Good Saint Dymphna, great wonder-worker in every affliction of mind and body, I humbly implore your powerful intercession with Jesus through Mary, the Health of the Sick, in my present need. (Mention it.) Saint Dymphna, martyr of purity, patroness of those who suffer with nervous and mental afflictions, beloved child of Jesus and Mary, pray to Them for me and obtain my request.*

*(Pray one Our Father, one Hail Mary and one Glory Be.)*

*Saint Dymphna, Virgin and Martyr, pray for us.*

## From Claire's Desk...

I'm cold. It's 85° outside, but I'm thinking about a bit of a sweater. Our AC is working!!

Our cooks are comfortable and the guests sigh with happiness when they walk into the refreshing air. The humidity is perfect and our fridge doors are dry.

Thank you for making the gift of proper heating and cooling a reality! For the very first time ever, everything is balanced.

The great crew from Standard Heating and Cooling and Captive Aire made the process as painless as possible. They worked faster than I've

ever seen construction go. Many thanks also to volunteer Mark Misselhorn for helping to guide the process.

This is exactly what this building needed to function for years to come. Your donations gave us a future. Thank you!



## Bench

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*  
Matthew 11:28

A place to rest a weary head. A spot to ease tired feet

after a day of walking. One of the benches near the crucifix did not survive the winter. These benches get heavy use, so a commercial replacement is needed. Could you help fund a bench? A replacement will cost around \$1,000.

## RECIPE

### Heavenly Pasta Salad

By Terry Hayes

1-16 oz package Elbow Macaroni  
1 small onion, diced fine  
1-2 red, yellow or green pepper, diced  
1 can sweetened condensed milk  
1/2 cup cider vinegar  
1/4 cup sugar  
1 cup mayonnaise  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
1 tablespoon mustard

Cook pasta until slightly firm. Drain and rinse in cold water.

Mix milk, vinegar, sugar, mayonnaise, pepper and mustard together. Pour over cold pasta and fold carefully. Chill in fridge for 2 to 4 hours before serving.



Diabetes, high blood pressure and asthma plague the population of 61605 zip code at much higher rates than the rest of Peoria.

The reasons are not simple, but one large factor that contributes greatly is the lack of good nutrition available. A food desert and lack of transportation mean trips to the grocery store are less frequent, resulting in fewer fresh produce items in the shopping cart.

Pre-seasoned rice and pasta mixes are easy to prepare and fill hungry tummies, but are very high in sodium.

Generational poverty has taught the younger ones how to survive. It's time we help them thrive.

When we offer fresh fruits and vegetables, the response of gratefulness is tremendous. A recent grant allowed us to put display racks in the dining room filled with fresh

## Nutrition policy

produce. The gasps of delight as people grab an apple or head of cabbage is great!

You'll find enclosed a nutrition policy and chart. While we will continue to take all wholesome food, we invite you to think about healthier alternatives.

As one donor told me, "I shop for Sophia's Kitchen like I'm shopping for my grandkids."

### A Thank you note

*"Sophia's Kitchen has given me so much..."*

*Sophia's gave me an oasis of peace and plenty when I was homeless. That included warm*

*food and a place to sit and enjoy it where I was treated with respect and compassion.*

*Providing not only a place to be human but the place & dignity we all deserve when our bodies need to follow through with the*

*food we receive. A veritable oasis giving me the strength and courage to move through that stage in my life."*

- from a guest of  
Sophia's Kitchen

### Gutters

A lake sounds peaceful and wonderful on a summer day, but it was not a happy surprise in the kitchen recently.

As we investigated the source of this water, we found that the gutter on the back side of the building was hanging at a most unusual manner, and the back of the building was soaked.

Volunteers have been able to repair this spot, again. A previous patch job had failed.

Gutter companies have given bids to replace the gutters with a better size for our roof, and install guards to help with the never ending leaves. Donations are needed to help cover the cost of this repair.

Any amount that exceeds this expense will be used to add insulation in the attic, or added to a building repair fund.

This building was built in the 1970's. In general, it is in good shape, but a 50 year old building that is heavily used will need repairs now and then. Good maintenance will keep it going for many years to come.

### Faith In Action

Sophia's Kitchen has seen a steady increase in the number of people seeking help. We now serve 1/3 more hungry souls as compared to last year. We expect that number to increase as the summer months come, with our greatest need in August.

Somehow, we always have enough food, but there are some Friday Pantries that are

#### Items needed for Friday Pantry

Low sodium soups  
Fruit fresh or canned  
Canned chicken  
Tuna  
Rice  
Whole wheat noodles  
Instant potatoes  
Tomato paste, and sauce  
Peanut butter  
Jelly  
Canned vegetables, low sodium  
Cereal, low sugar  
Crackers  
Popcorn  
Feminine products  
Cleaning supplies, dish soap  
Toilet Paper

pretty limited in what we have to offer.

We welcome canned food drives, or Amazon or Walmart deliveries.

Donations are accepted Monday through Friday from 8 AM to 3 PM. Online donations can be made at [www.CatholicPeoria.com](http://www.CatholicPeoria.com) and our mailing address is:

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In the Spirit of Saint Francis and the Friars Minor, Sophia's Kitchen began at Sacred Heart Church as the Sandwich Program, and continues today as an outreach of Heart of Peoria Catholic Community.

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

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**Staff:**

Fr. William Miller  
Pastor

Fr. Luke Spannagel  
Chaplain

Claire Crone  
Director

Sr. Salve Tusing  
Asst. Kitchen Manager

Courtney Curtis  
Assistant Manager

Linda Ruppman  
Volunteer Coordinator

CatholicPeoria.Com

## Feeding The Poor in The USA

### Farewell to Sr. Merlinda!

We have been blessed since 2016 to have Sr. Merlinda Marco serving as our cook. Sr. Merlinda's assignment to Sophia's Kitchen will be ending August 1, when she will move to the Retreat Center in Henry.

Beyond being an excellent cook with great imagination, Sr. Merlinda has been a dear friend to everyone at Sophia's Kitchen. Her kindness and laughter have brought great joy. We are going to miss our time together!

Sr. Salve Tusing joins our kitchen team in August. We look forward to getting to know her better as she serves our community.

*There is a season for everything, a time for every occupation under heaven.  
Ecclesiastes 3: 1*



Sr. Merlinda

Sr. Salve

### 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 immortal souls.

### Sophia's Kitchen Prayer

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