



Chattanooga Community Kitchen

Help from the Heart of the City

2021 Spring Newsletter



Pandemic All-Stars

The pandemic has affected many areas of our daily operations, including the availability of volunteers. Understandably, some had concerns with serving on-site; however, many have found new and existing opportunities to participate. In this edition, we want to spotlight some of the incredible ways that you have served our community during the pandemic.



Seasons Change

As of May 7, 2021, our CEO, Jens Christensen, will be leaving the Kitchen for another position here in Chattanooga. As part of the transition, David Costellow, an eight-year employee of the Kitchen will be acting as Interim Director, allowing the board time to work with a search committee to select the organization's new CEO.

Learn more in Jens' note on page 4.

Sack Lunch Superstars



St. Nicholas School students prepared some spooky good sack lunches.

The need for hundreds of sack lunches each week to deliver to area campsites stretched our resources greatly. This project quickly became a weekly activity for groups both offsite and at the Kitchen. We continue to deliver sack lunches, in addition to a hot meal, every day.

Thank you to so many churches, schools, and other groups who have faithfully prepared lunches. Your dedication has made a huge difference! Your support is still needed. Contact us if you would like to contribute. Whether you bring a dozen or a day's worth, it is a tremendous help.

From home...



or school!



Schools have also used lunch packing projects as learning opportunities to better understand homelessness and its local impact.

Sack lunch assembly is an excellent group project. Below, Notre Dame Weekend Warriors were able to pack over 300 lunches in a short time.



Be a sack lunch superstar!

Email: volunteer@homelesschattanooga.org

Helpers from Home

Off-site projects have been a tremendous help over the last year. Your creativity and flexibility has been incredible! Many have assembled hygiene bags and sack lunches from home or collected items and brought them to us.

Some of our groups, who were regular meal servers before the pandemic, have adopted our monthly needs list or continued to support by providing the food they would normally serve. Others have given financially what they would have spent to help continue to meet needs.

If you want to help but are concerned about face-to-face contact, we understand! Our volunteer coordinator would love to help you or your group find meaningful opportunities to serve during this time.



(L): Red Bank Lions Club collected a car load of supplies for the Kitchen. (R): Alex Brumley bakes weekly sweets and was even recognized by the governor! (B):Latrice and the ladies of Alpha Kappa Alpha recently collected dozens of items during an off-site collection.



Thank you to Sal and Judy for providing catered meals during the pandemic.

A Note from Our CEO

For the better part of the past seventeen years, I have walked through the doors of the Chattanooga Community Kitchen multiple times a day. My feet naturally know the number of steps between each floor. My hands can find the keyholes, light-switches and door knobs in absolute darkness. My heart knows the stories of so many men, women and children whose lives have changed dramatically through the resources we are able to provide.



Jens Christensen
Chief Executive Officer

The smiles of children as they found comfort and security in our Maclellan Shelter for Families have been burned into my vision. I can still smell the home-cooked meal we shared at the House of All Souls with Brother Ron, Dancer the dog, and the disabled men who would live there after we cut the ribbon to our first permanent supportive housing facility. And I will never forget the day I sat in my office, working on a grant, as the business end of a chainsaw came through the wall during our Day Center renovation – another first of its kind program for the folks we serve.

To say that the Chattanooga Community Kitchen has meaning would be, at best, an understatement. To say it has meaning to me would be even more diminutive of the truth. The great work done here, the history, the present – it is all a part of my reality, my identity – in many ways, for me, it is the very essence of what gives this world meaning.

That meaning, this mission, this incredible organization – these all exist because of you and your belief in meeting the urgent needs of our most vulnerable neighbors. I am forever grateful for your service and your support of our work here at the Chattanooga Community Kitchen. I am even more grateful that you have allowed me to join you along this incredible journey.

For forty years now, the Kitchen has made a difference in the lives of people that might otherwise be overlooked or forgotten. From housing to shelter to meals and even foot care – if there is a need, we work to meet that need, while also focusing on addressing what caused the need in the first place. Never in its history has this organization been on such solid footing, with such wonderful volunteers and staff, and such remarkable opportunity – the future is bright for CCK and the people we serve. But, that future will be different than the last several years.

Friday, May 7th, will be my last day as CEO of the Chattanooga Community Kitchen. I've never imagined I'd leave this organization. But soon, I will be heading down the street to Habitat for Humanity where I will continue to partner with the Kitchen in serving vulnerable people, in changing lives and in working to eliminate homelessness.

I know you will still be here, working compassionately alongside others like you, supporting the great work of the Kitchen's staff – and, I assure you, I will be right by your side in this new role as well. To paraphrase an old cliché: "We should not say goodbye. We'll see you soon."

You've been a great friend to the Kitchen, to me and to those we serve over these many years, and I know this good work will continue. For this, I thank you.

I'll see you soon.

Gold Star Groups

Utilizing volunteer groups can be tricky during a socially distant pandemic, but we have been able to do so in a safe and productive way. These groups have been a great help by, among other things, sorting donations, serving meals, and organizing our pantry.

Groups are still needed. Our new donations project manager is seeking assistance to efficiently organize our pantry and donation areas. To sign up, click the Groups Project icon on the Get Involved page of our website and fill out the form.



Visit our website: homelesschattanooga.org



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We value your support and regard ourselves as accountable not only to you but also to God for stewardship of the funds you entrust to us. We are audited by a recognized, local independent CPA firm and publish an audited annual financial statement. The Chattanooga Community Kitchen (Chattanooga Church Ministries, Inc.) is a 501(c)3 organization with EIN 62-1151413. Qualified contributions are tax deductible per IRS regulations.

Thank you for being a partner in our work to change lives!