

## Hunger in Our Midst: Helping a Hungry Person Find a Free Meal

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Near the Free Library on Rittenhouse Square, while waiting for the traffic light to change, I was approached by a man who politely asked if I knew of a church in the neighborhood that served free meals. The question stumped me.

For decades, I had been contributing to Philabundance, a program that helps feed hungry people, but I didn't know where to send *that man* on *that day*. According to Philabundance, hunger affects 900,000 individuals in the Delaware Valley, and *hunger happens every day*. On that day, that particular man was hungry because his funds had run out after he had traveled to Philadelphia for a job opportunity and ended up living in a shelter. He was still hopeful that he would get the job but there were a lot of other applicants.

Even the most generous contributors to charitable organizations may feel helpless when they encounter a hungry person on the street. You may wonder what you personally can do at that moment. To direct a hungry person to the nearest free meal, especially as the cold winter weather closes in, keep this information handy. Anyone at any time may need to depend on the kindness of strangers.

**Daily:** *The Sunday Breakfast Rescue Mission*, at 302 N. 13th Street, provides free meals, including breakfast at 7 a.m., lunch at noon, snack at 2:15 p.m. on most days, and dinner at 6 p.m. 215-844-7116. <http://www.sundaybreakfast.org/1172-2/>

In our neighborhood, several religious institutions operate food programs:

- **Tuesday:** *Lutheran Church of the Holy Communion*, at 2111 Sansom Street, gives away bagged lunches to homeless people every Tuesday from noon to 1:30 p.m. In addition, their *Food Cabinet* distributes food to neighbors and community members on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, and they distribute *Senior Food Boxes* on the third Wednesday of each month. 215-567-3668. <http://www.lc-hc.org/drupal/>

- **Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday:** *Broad Street Ministry's Broad Street Hospitality Collaborative*, 315 S. Broad Street, serves dinner on Tuesday and Wednesday from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. and lunch on Thursday and Saturday from noon to 1 p.m. 215-735-4847. <http://www.broadstreethospitality.org/>

- **Saturday:** *St. Mark's Episcopal Church*, 1625 Locust Street, runs a *Soup Bowl* program, serving soup and bread from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Bread is donated by Metropolitan Bakery. <http://www.saintmarksphiladelphia.org/soupbowl/> St. Mark's also runs a *food cupboard*, open Tuesday to Friday from 9:30 to 11 a.m. 215-735-1416. <http://www.saintmarksphiladelphia.org/foodcupboard/>

- **First and third Thursday** of each month (except for holidays): *Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia's Mitzvah Food Project*, 2100 Arch Street (Jewish Communal Services Building) operates a *food pantry* distributing non-perishable groceries from 5 to 6:30 p.m. The same

organization operates four other food pantries in the Delaware Valley. 215-832-0509. <https://www.jewishphilly.org/programs-and-services/mitzvah-food-project/>

Other local organizations offer support, shelter and information beyond providing meal service to those in need. Among them are:

- *Trinity Memorial Church*, 22nd and Spruce Streets, runs *Wintershelter* from mid-November through mid-April, providing overnight shelter, dinner and breakfast to a limited number of screened male participants, in cooperation with the Bethesda Project. <http://www.bethesdaproject.org/> Volunteers from other neighborhood religious institutions, including First Presbyterian Church, Temple Beth Zion-Beth Israel and First Unitarian Church, serve food at Wintershelter on rotating days. <http://www.communityoutreachpartnership.org/wintershelter/>

- Philabundance operates the *Food Helpline*, 800-319-FOOD (3663) Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The bilingual staff will direct a caller in need to the closest food cupboard. <http://www.philabundance.org/programs-2/food-help-line-2/>

- *Project Home* produces a pocket-sized brochure entitled, "Where to Turn," listing places to go for a variety of services including meals. 215-232-1984. Download and print brochure at: <https://projecthome.org/sites/projecthome.org/files/Resource%20Guide%20August2014.pdf>

### Peace Day Sing Along for Peace

At 6 p.m. Sunday, September 21, a crowd gathered in front of the Ethical Humanist Society of Philadelphia on Rittenhouse Square to participate in the fourth annual Peace Day Sing Along for Peace, one of many Peace Day Philly events culminating a week celebrating the United Nations International Day of Peace. Hugh Taft-Morales (right) led the group in peace songs from the Sixties, and Earth Day Kids in yellow tee-shirts performed.

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