

Mission Possible:

How You Can Start
and Operate a Soup Kitchen



By Irwin S. Stoolmacher, Martin Tuchman & Peter C. Wise

Artwork by Susan Darley

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More Praise for Mission Possible

Almost everyone wants to do something to make a difference. Visionary leaders of the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (T.A.S.K) have made a huge difference in the lives of their patrons and in those of us who have been privileged to work with them. Mission Possible is about the best practices that have changed peoples' lives for the better through a soup kitchen. Here's the model. Make a difference!

~ **E. Roy Riley**, *Bishop, New Jersey Synod, ELCA*
(*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*)

Dedication

This book is dedicated to all those who find it necessary to come to a soup kitchen to meet their nutritional needs.

Acknowledgements

Co-author Martin Tuchman was the conceiver of this project and his foundation, the Tuchman Foundation, is the underwriter of the book.

The authors also benefitted from the review comments of Dennis Micai, TASK Executive Director; Phyllis Stoolmacher, Director, Mercer Street Friends Food Bank, and Lee Seglem and Henry Weiss, members of the TASK Board of Trustees.

Table of Contents

Dedication & Acknowledgements

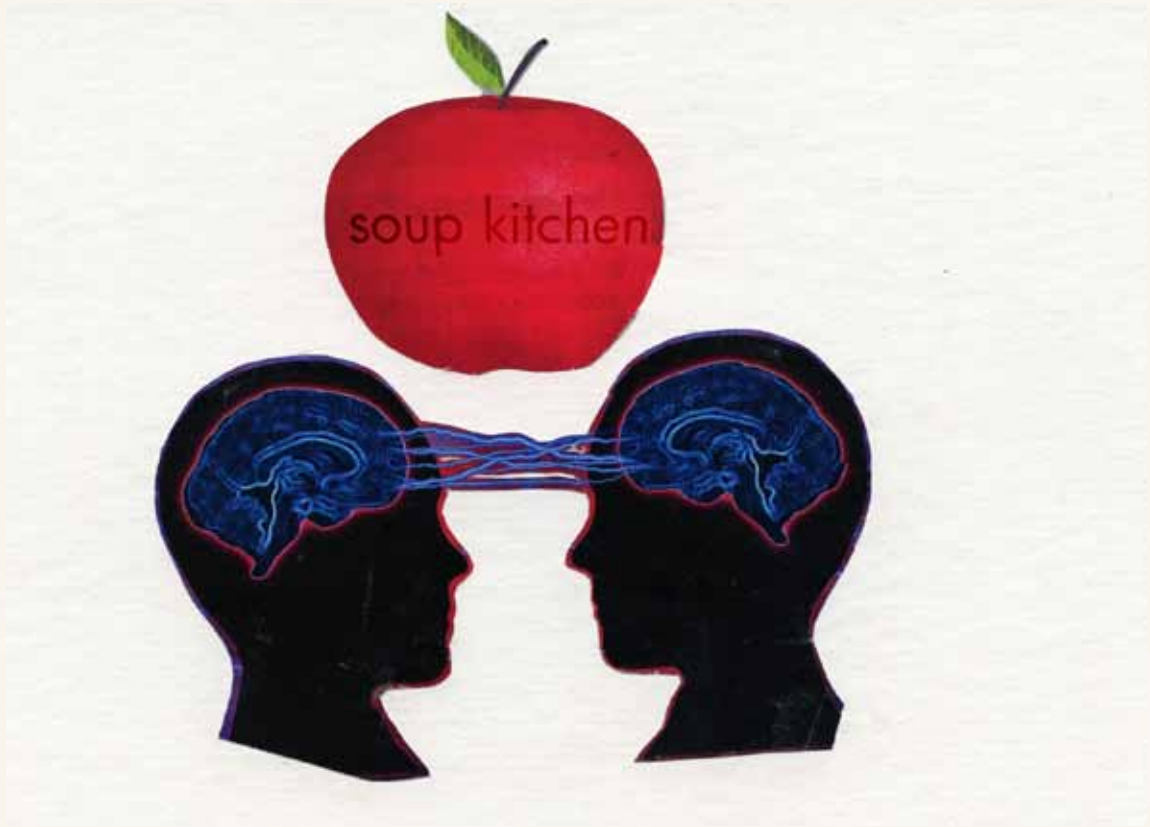
Preface

1. Introduction
2. Getting Started
3. Location & Facility
4. Board & Management Leadership
5. Marketing & Public Relations
6. Food Acquisition & Food Safety
7. Food Service
8. Financial Management
9. Fundraising & Development
10. Staff Management
11. Volunteer Recruitment & Management
12. Patron Relations
13. Safety & Security
14. Expanding the Mission

Epilogue

Appendices:

- A. Obtaining Nonprofit Status
- B. Nonprofit Bylaws & Committee Structure
- C. Typical Soup Kitchen Vendors
- D. Grant Making Organizations & Providers of Information
- E. Books on Hunger
- F. Services to Spur the Development of New Soup Kitchens



preface



Dear Reader,

It would be better if this book did not need to be written. However, the reality of continuing high levels of poverty and the pain and indignity of those living in hunger convinces us that a handbook on how to open and operate a soup kitchen responds to a critical need.

Based on every indicator, more and more Americans are facing food scarcity due to lack of money to purchase food. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) the number of Americans who lived in households that lacked consistent access to adequate food has soared to 49.1 million, the highest level since the USDA began tracking hunger data.

The severe economic downturn has dramatically increased the number of Americans in need of emergency assistance. Many of the newly needy have been self-sufficient in the past but are now unemployed for the first time in their lives and must depend on food stamps, food pantries and soup kitchens to make ends meet. In fact, some of these folks may have previously volunteered at food pantries and soup kitchens. While there is some overlap among those who come to soup kitchens and food pantries, these social service agencies often can have very different clientele. Patrons who come to soup kitchens generally do not have stable housing and are unable to cook a meal where they are living. Those who come to food pantries generally have a place to cook and eat their meal.

Unfortunately, there is a great need for both additional food pantries and soup kitchens in our nation. At the present time we estimate that there are approximately 5,000 existing soup kitchens in America. We have no doubt, that thousands upon thousands of our citizens could be spared the pain and indignity of hunger if ad-

ditional soup kitchens were to be opened in our nation. While most people visualize inner city poverty when they think about a soup kitchen, it is important to note that there are marked migration patterns of poverty out from the cities into the near-in suburbs, as documented by the Brookings Institution and others. This suggests an emerging need for soup kitchens in some inner suburbs. Beyond the cities and inner suburbs, there are also many rural areas without adequate emergency food services that could benefit from having strategically located soup kitchens.

The terms soup kitchen, food pantry and food bank are often confused. All are emergency food programs, but a soup kitchen is a place where sit-down meals (hot or cold) are provided. A food pantry provides food staples (generally non-perishable) to individuals in take-home grocery bags. A food bank is a larger regional entity that serves as a central distributor of donated or purchased food to local hunger relief agencies such as soup kitchens, food pantries, and emergency shelters.

The title of our book is *Mission Possible: How You Can Start and Operate a Soup Kitchen* but the book should be equally useful to existing soup kitchens that want to improve or expand their current operations. It also can be helpful to nonprofits which are already operating food pantries or shelters or other social service facilities.

This handbook comes from the authors' many years of experience with nonprofits in the social service sector including soup kitchens located in Trenton, New Jersey. These soup kitchens serve hot meals on an unconditional, no questions asked, open-door policy to all who are hungry. One kitchen is a faith-based operation started in 1980 called "Loaves and Fishes" which serves lunch the last two Saturdays of each month. The other is a private, non-religious soup kitchen started in 1982 named the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen or TASK whose operation is



described in detail in Chapter 1. TASK operates Monday through Friday, providing three meals each day. TASK is currently serving over 3,400 meals per week or 175,000 meals per year.

Trenton is New Jersey's capital city as well as the county seat of Mercer County, located in the center of the state. With a peak population of 135,000 in the 1940's and 50's, it was once a booming manufacturing center and the nation's leading pottery producer. It also was home to the Roebling Steel Company which made wire suspension cables for many projects including the Golden Gate Bridge and the Brooklyn Bridge. Due to the collapse of the manufacturing sector and the departure of living wage jobs to the southern US and then overseas, Trenton is today a poor city with a population of fewer than 80,000, high unemployment and school drop-out rates, gang activity and crime.

An excellent portrait of the poverty landscape of the Trenton region and many similar parts of America may be found in a book called *IN PLAIN SIGHT: Battling Hunger, Building Lives - The Story of TASK*. Its author is Lee Seglem, a member of the TASK Board of Trustees. Seglem explains how profound urban poverty can exist in proximity to suburban affluence. He also describes the architecture of emergency food operations in the U.S., a system he calls "Hunger, Inc." Seglem's book reveals TASK to be an extraordinary place, where people do extraordinary things.

Some would say that what takes place at TASK is magical – in the way it transforms people's lives – patrons, staff and volunteers. TASK is a soup kitchen and more. It's a soup kitchen plus a comprehensive array of social service programs. TASK has also demonstrated how an emergency food nonprofit organization operating on the front lines of poverty can be sustainable and effective.

Peter Wise was a long time volunteer at Loaves and Fishes and the Director of TASK from 1998 to 2007. During that time period TASK served over 1 million meals to the hungry residents of Trenton. Irwin Stoolmacher has been a fundraising and marketing consultant to more than 100 nonprofits in New Jersey, including TASK, for over two decades. Martin Tuchman has served as a member of the TASK Board of Trustees since February 2003.

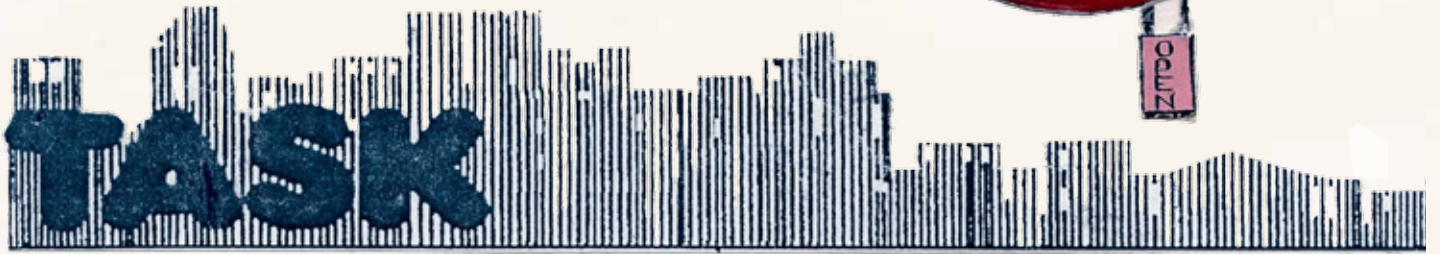
The information, insights and tips contained herein are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect those of the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen or any other individuals. We are also responsible for any omissions, or errors.

We sincerely hope that *Mission Possible: How You Can Start and Operate a Soup Kitchen* will be helpful to those who would like to do something about acute hunger in their community. The complete content of the book is also available on line at www.startasoupkitchen.org.

If after reading this book you would like to learn more, please visit the above website. Through this site you can arrange for a visit and/or seminar at TASK. At this time you will meet the wonderful staff of TASK and see first-hand the magic of this special place.

While there are many challenges in operating a soup kitchen, there are also many rewards. It is very gratifying to know that you are doing something concrete to alleviate the suffering of neighbors who live in poverty. It is our hope that you too will experience the rewards that come in doing this work.

Irwin S. Stoolmacher
Martin Tuchman
Peter C. Wise - 2011



chapter one

Introduction

Background of the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK)

TASK was started by a small group of dedicated volunteers concerned that there were “people in the city who did not have enough to eat.” Opening day for the soup kitchen was January 13, 1982. Volunteers came on duty at 11 a.m. and at 1 p.m. the doors opened and 60 people were served turkey soup, crackers, a peanut butter sandwich, Jell-O and coffee or a fruit drink.

Today TASK patrons include the elderly, the addicted, the mentally ill, the physically challenged, those recently released from prison, veterans, recent immigrants, families with children, and the working poor. The majority of TASK patrons possess multiple barriers to employment, such as addiction problems and mental illness (some are afflicted with both mental illness and chemical addiction, the so-called MICA population). TASK patrons are a population composed in large part of individuals who need intense social, health, and human care services to re-enter the work force. Chronic hunger and shortages of food at the end of the month are predictable events for many people in Trenton.

The vast majority of TASK patrons are “food-insecure,” to use the current term of choice to describe those who consistently are not able to access enough food to fully meet basic needs at all times due to lack of financial resources. In plain English, those who are food-insecure subsist on barely adequate quantities of food and frequently have to worry about how to get their next meal.

In the last few years TASK has seen more and more of the working poor on their lunch break, wearing their tool belts and paint-splattered overalls, coming to the kitchen to receive a hot meal and save on their food budget. To accommodate the working poor, TASK has developed a card system that allows them to go to the head of the line so they can meet lunch hour time constraints.

Most recently, as a result of the recession, TASK is seeing an increasing number of individuals who are unemployed for the first time in their adult working lives. Included among the newly unemployed are individuals who had volunteered at TASK in better times.

TASK now serves a hot nutritious, multiple course, sit-down meal three times each day. TASK also offers a wide range of programs and services including

an Adult Education Program that provides training in literacy, math, computer skills and preparation for the GED for some 90 students with 60 volunteer tutors. It also employs a full-time social worker and offers a robust visual and performing arts program; mail service for the homeless, use of phone, fax, and message machines; distribution of donated clothing, books, hygiene articles; health screening and food stamp prescreening and enrollment, among other services.

The vast majority of TASK’s financial donors and over 2,500 volunteers live in the Mercer County suburban communities surrounding Trenton. TASK is widely considered an effective provider of meals and services and has received six consecutive Charity Navigator four-star ratings (highest) for the fiscally responsible way it executes its mission.

Over the years, those who have led TASK have adhered to the principle of doing what they do best, scrupulously avoiding the temptation to take on duties they have no experience performing – that is to say, they have avoided mission drift.

For example, rather than open new branches of TASK in the other wards of Trenton, TASK delivers hot meals at no-cost to satellite sites at neighborhood churches where volunteers from local congregations serve their neighbors in need. Similarly, when it is cost-effective, TASK has contracted with other charities to provide services at their sites rather than increase staff to provide those services.

In three decades, TASK has evolved from simply serving meals to become a multi-focused organization with a four-part mission:

- provide meals to the hungry people of Trenton
- offer services that encourage self-sufficiency and improve quality of life
- inform the wider public of the needs of the hungry
- advocate for resources to meet those needs.

Started with a first year budget of \$40,000 in 1982, TASK now raises almost \$2,000,000 annually without being overly dependent on government funding (less than 5% of TASK funds come from government). Some 25 foundations, dozens of churches, synagogues and mosques, hundreds of businesses and thousands of individuals annually support TASK.

Feeding the Hungry vs. Ending Poverty

It is important to state that there are those who feel that operating soup kitchens is a Band-Aid approach and actually retards the larger effort of reducing poverty. Some observers, like Janet Poppendieck of Hunter College in her book “Sweet Charity”, argue that soup kitchens that only address hunger are “aiming too low” and this “allows government to shirk its duty to promote the common good.”

The authors are of the mind that it is not a matter of either/or but rather, that both efforts are needed. We cannot let people go hungry while we address the factors that result in high levels of poverty. We feel strongly that government at all levels needs to do more to address the root causes of hunger and poverty.

This is the worst of times since the Great Depression for those who are poor or near poor in America. Taken together, these two categories constitute almost a third of all Americans. With rare exception, states, counties and cities are slashing budgets, and the lines at soup kitchens and food pantries are growing longer.

Due to the nation’s high unemployment, the USDA Food Stamp Program (also known as the Supplemental Food Assistance Program – SNAP) has more people enrolled than at any time in its 40-year history (one in seven Americans). Hundreds of thousands of children suffer pangs of hunger as they await their first meal of the day – a free breakfast and/or lunch served at school. More Americans are facing food insecurity for the first time in their lives.

How to Use the Book

This book is meant to provide basic information to individuals and groups who are considering starting or are in the early stages of operating a soup kitchen. Each chapter in this book is composed of two sections: a two to three page overview of the subject followed by a list of tips, guides to some of the more subtle operations of a soup kitchen.

We have attempted to organize this book in a chronological fashion. The book will take you from your very first conceptual considerations to relatively detailed instructions on the most common challenges you will face. In all cases, our essential goal has been to be practical and helpful.



Tales of TASK

The Truck Driver

A truck driver from South Carolina had moved to New Jersey for family reasons and then found himself unable to get a job driving a truck because of the New Jersey requirement to pass a written test. He first came to TASK to eat but was introduced to the TASK Adult Basic Education program where he was tutored in literacy skills until he was able to pass the test for the commercial drivers license (CDL). He is now employed, driving a truck and out of poverty.



chapter two

Getting Started

Chapter 2: Getting Started

This chapter is primarily directed towards soup kitchen start-up projects, but much of the information and guidance is also applicable to existing soup kitchens or food pantries looking to expand their services.

There are some clearly defined initial actions:

- Ascertain the services provided by other agencies and nonprofits
- Evaluate your resources – food, facility, funding, and volunteers
- Determine whether your service is religiously based
- Define the scope of your mission
- Determine whether you should incorporate as a nonprofit
- Develop fundamental food service policies

Determination of Services Provided by Other Agencies

You should contact social service agencies, food pantries, the local food bank, religious leaders and government officials to determine the extent to which the hunger problem is being addressed and where there may be gaps in service. You do not want to duplicate what is already being provided.

It is strongly suggested that you and your group visit soup kitchens outside your area, if available, to help you become familiar with the resources needed, and the common practices and challenges you will face.

Realistic Analysis of Start-up Resources

Consider and think about your sources of food. These include Feeding America food banks, organizations that distribute federal commodities, local supermarkets and restaurants, community gardens, gleaning projects, food drives from religious institutions, schools, and businesses. What can be donated and what food will have to be purchased?

Will there be a cost for the facility in which the meal is prepared and served? Do you need to buy food preparation equipment, kitchen and dining room supplies, a refrigerator or a freezer?

Do you want to solicit funds and/or food from government sources? One downside to becoming dependent on government funds is the possibility of funding cuts if there is a down-turn in the economy (which may be the very time when you are seeing the greatest need for your services). This is the reason there is a real advantage to having a diversified funding base (see Chapter 9).

How many volunteers will you need? Will there be paid staff? What are the particulars of your facility? Is your project an outgrowth of a group with a cadre of volunteers? Chapter 11 will provide further details on volunteer recruitment and management, but the main consideration at this point is how many volunteers you need to prepare and serve the meal and do clean-up afterwards. You should also consider any specific skills needed such as cooking, legal assistance and experience in dealing with low-income populations. Similarly, does anyone in your group have food safety training and certification? Does anyone have a nutritional and/or dietician background? Does anyone have an explicit link to the food industry?

A major consideration is the facility for preparing and serving your meal. Chapter 3 will provide guidance relative to your kitchen and dining room. But at this point you must determine if you will be housed in an existing building or if you will need to build. Does the facility come free or are rental funds required?

Religious vs. Non-Religious

Will you operate from a religious perspective or provide secular service? If you want to receive government food commodities and/or become a member of the local food bank, meals must be served to all who come to the soup kitchen without regard to religious preference and worshiping cannot be a condition for receiving a meal.

In addition, some patrons may not be comfortable in an overtly religious setting, for example, Hispanic patrons in a Protestant church or African-Americans in a historically white church (or whites in a historically African-American church).

As you begin to form your project, another approach to consider is that of operating as an interfaith

organization. By involving many different congregations you will have greater access to both volunteers and funding.

Define the Scope of Your Mission

After determining the unmet emergency food needs in the community and developing an understanding of the resources needed to meet that need, you are now in a position to define your mission or purpose. A crucial decision is whether you will be single purpose, i.e., meal service, or provide multiple services.

Although the development of a mission statement can often be a frustrating and tedious process, it is worth the effort because it can become a sort of automatic pilot that keeps you on course if you consistently refer to it.

Should You Incorporate as a Nonprofit?

Many soup kitchens incorporate as nonprofit agencies. Becoming a nonprofit or a 501(c) (3) organization means the entity, usually a corporation, is organized for a nonprofit purpose and has been recognized by the IRS as being tax-exempt by virtue of its charitable programs. Forming a corporation means that the founders, or incorporators, are creating a legal entity that exists wholly apart from the people involved with it. Most people prefer to form a nonprofit corporation because of the personal liability protection a corporation provides.

An important second reason for becoming a nonprofit under the tax code is to allow donors to deduct their contributions from their taxable income. A third reason is because you want to accept grants and donations and want exemption for yourself from paying federal income tax. Yet another reason is that you must be a 501(c) 3 organization to receive government commodities and join the food bank. Section 501(c) (3) organizations are very restricted in how much political and legislative lobbying activity they may conduct. Appendices A and B provide further details on filing and approval of corporate, nonprofit status and development of bylaws.

Other administrative issues that you will need to consider at the outset are insurance coverage for property and liability, health insurance for any employees and Health Department Certification from your local municipality.

Fundamental Food Service Policies

Agree upon the following:

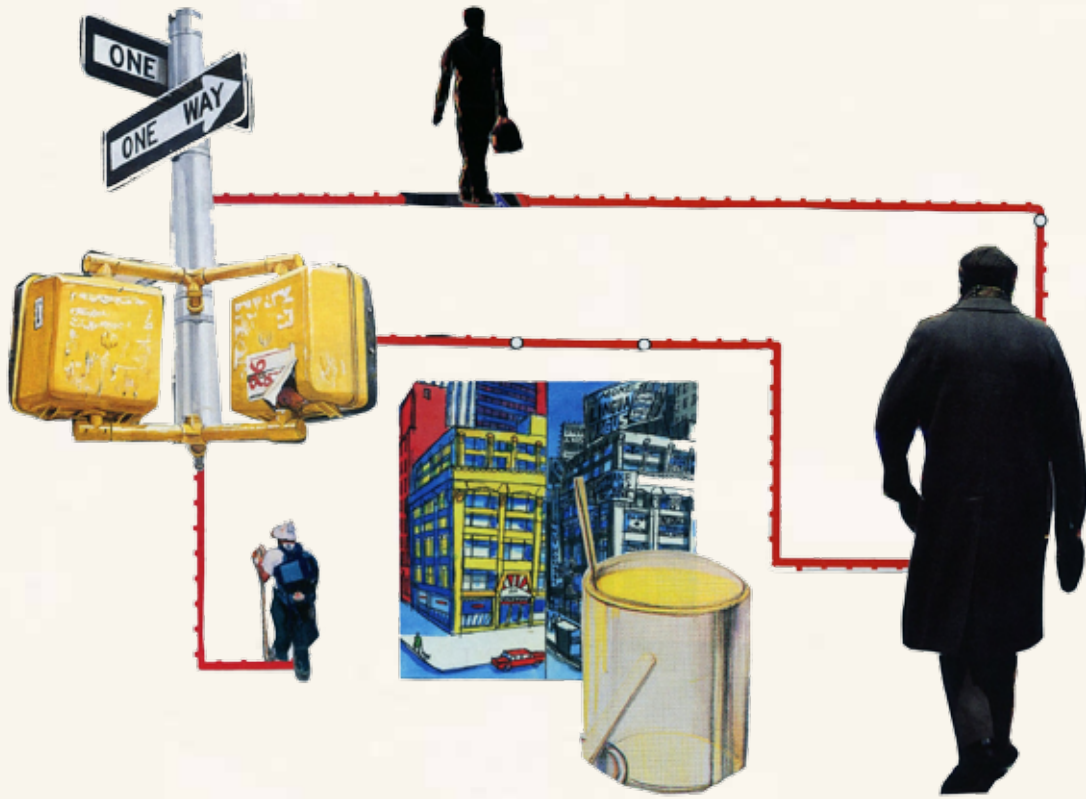
1. How do you want to refer to those who come to your soup kitchen? Various titles we have heard are dinner guests, clients, consumers, and patrons. TASK uses the title patrons since consumers and clients sound somewhat clinical.
2. What will be your days, times and hours of operation?
3. How many people do you plan to serve initially?
4. Who will do menu planning?
5. Has anyone taken, or will they take, food safety training?
6. Will you be serving on a cafeteria line vs. or providing table service?
7. Do you want to provide immediate service for those who don't have much time (who may be on lunch break from their low-paying job)?
8. Do you want to be able to provide alternate servings (for those who are allergic to certain foods or those who have religious dietary restrictions)?

TIPS for Getting Started

TIP # 1 – In your mission discussions, you will probably find that your resources constrain what you would ideally wish to do, so it is important to start modestly and be successful, as opposed to being overly ambitious and falling short or running into avoidable problems.

TIP # 2 – One possible source of food for your kitchen is “Plant a Row” projects where home gardeners designate one or more rows for food to be donated to the soup kitchen.

TIP # 3 – Your mission statement should take no longer than 10 to 15 seconds to read or hear. It should hopefully stimulate the response, tell me much more. Your mission should be one that is easily described to all of your constituents – board, staff, volunteers, donors, patrons, and the wider community.



chapter three

Location & Facility

Chapter 3: Location & Facility

Location, location, location: that's the old real estate adage, and the same is true of a proposed soup kitchen. Of course, a soup kitchen location will initially be driven by whether an existing building is available or whether a building must be found or constructed.

Locate Near Your Patrons

A soup kitchen should obviously be located close to areas where those living in poverty reside. The vast majority of patrons walk to soup kitchens. If a location near an impoverished neighborhood is not possible, the soup kitchen should be close to bus stops or other public transportation hubs.

If possible, it is also preferable that the soup kitchen be located near other social support agencies and facilities (such as emergency shelters and health care facilities). Most soup kitchens get their start in local churches, mosques and synagogues. Even in crime-filled inner city neighbors, local religious sites can be a sea of tranquility. Also the fact that the meal is being served in such a site promotes respect for the facility among soup kitchen patrons. Therefore, if constructing a facility from scratch is not feasible, local religious institutions should be approached to determine if they have a location that they will allow you to use.

Do NOT be surprised to encounter resistance from the immediate neighbors (including the business community) of your proposed soup kitchen location. NIMBYism (not in my backyard) is alive and well in our society. Most people don't want to have a soup kitchen in their backyard. It is important to reach out to the neighbors adjacent to your site to allay their fears and to explain the steps you intend to take to mitigate any negative impact the soup kitchen might have on their lives. Positive features should be emphasized, for example, more police presence in the neighborhood, improvements to the building façade, improved lighting, and the like.

Existing Building vs. New Building

If you are looking at an existing facility for your soup kitchen, you will want to ascertain what changes might be required to bring the building into compliance with current health and fire codes. Other aspects to consider in judging an existing building are as follows: suitability of kitchen equipment and food preparation and storage areas, security alarm systems, dining hall space, tables and chairs, rest rooms, waste disposal, and parking for volunteers. On that last point, safe and secure parking is very important. Volunteers are not always familiar with the neighborhood surrounding a soup kitchen. It is crucial to have a well-lit parking area or on-street parking immediately adjacent to the facility. Additionally, having an operational air conditioning system is a real plus during the summer months.

If your situation calls for the construction of a new facility, one of your first steps will be to estimate the cost of the total project. In addition to land costs, construction costs vary depending on region and specific location. Outfitting a kitchen from scratch also involves significant purchases such as freezers (stand-alone and/or walk-in), coolers, dish washer, ovens, stoves, hand washing and serving stations. Additional costs would include dining room tables and chairs, restroom facilities, office furniture and equipment, trash dumpsters, carts and custodial equipment. If you are considering construction of your own soup kitchen or even doing major renovations of an existing facility, it is important to consult with an architect and professional kitchen designer (preferably commercial) to make sure the facility can be brought into compliance with health and fire codes.

Before planning a construction or major renovation project, you should check with local municipal government officials relative to zoning and site considerations. You may also be required to register as a food provider to the general public and be subject to code enforcement and inspection.

Universal Facility Requirements

Whether new or existing, it is preferable that the facility is on one floor and that it be on the ground floor.

This eliminates the need for carrying kitchen and food supplies up or down stairs. It also minimizes the risk of soup kitchen patrons and volunteers slipping and falling down steps (many soup kitchen patrons are not steady on their feet due to age and/or disability). It is also important that the facility provide an adequate loading dock and delivery area.

The soup kitchen must be compliant with local codes and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and be fully handicapped accessible. This applies to entrance and exit doorways and restrooms. Curb cuts on the sidewalk for wheel chairs should be included.

If an existing building is to be used, it is important that there be NO patron access to other parts of the building. Such access has resulted in vandalism and theft in churches used for soup kitchen projects.

It is important to have a well lit, clean, and cheerful dining room with light colored walls and ceiling. Tile flooring is best from a cleaning standpoint but care must be taken to avoid wet spots when cleaning as they are a very real slip and fall hazard. Don't skimp on custodial services. Nobody wants to use a dirty bathroom.

If possible, having attractive art work on the walls is highly desirable. Other positive features include a bulletin board of other social service agencies and programs, a suggestion box, table space for social support representatives, and space for donated clothing distribution and donated books.

Location & Facility Tips

TIP #1 – A soup kitchen must consider safety concerns. Given this, try to avoid locations next to bars and liquor stores or sites that the local police department has identified as having gang activity. Sites in proximity to police sub-stations are worth considering.

TIP #2 – If you are contemplating a soup kitchen project in a part of a town that already has a soup kitchen in a different ward or section of the town, investigate whether your project could be a spin-off satellite site of the existing soup kitchen.

TIP #3 – If you will be using an existing building which has other uses (such as a church), you should determine whether the building insurance covers soup kitchen activities, slip and fall accidents and potential vandalism of volunteer and staff cars.

TIP #4 – Area companies, colleges and universities sometimes will donate good quality used furniture and computers to entities that serve the needy. Local thrift shops, Craigslist and eBay are other places to acquire furniture and equipment below market prices.

TIP #5 – A fresh coat of paint can do wonders for a drab room. Unopened cans of paint can often be secured as donations.

TIP #6 – Graffiti breeds graffiti. If graffiti appears inside or outside the building, it should be removed immediately and the police should be contacted to launch an investigation.

Tales of TASK

TASK Struggles to Find a Home

TASK opened its doors at the First United Methodist Church of Trenton in 1982. In the eyes of some, however, the soup kitchen was an unwelcome presence. Business proprietors in the area surrounding the church were concerned that they would lose customers and some city planners and real estate developers felt that the soup kitchen was standing in the way of urban progress. By 1985 the soup kitchen was forced to leave the church building and itself became homeless. From 1986 to 1991 in a desperate effort to remain in service, TASK moved repeatedly (at one point handing out sandwiches from the back of a station wagon parked in a vacant city corner lot). Finally, in July of 1991, TASK moved into its brand new 6,000 square foot permanent home thereby ending a long odyssey of moving from one temporary location to another.



chapter four

Board & Management Leadership

Chapter 4: Board & Management Leadership

It goes without saying that leadership is crucial to every business endeavor and project, whether nonprofit or for profit. Leadership is particularly important to a prospective soup kitchen project that invariably will be faced with a variety of external challenges and opinions on how to proceed.

Clear Mission

One way to minimize difficulties at project inception is to create a clear and concise statement of your mission or purpose. This statement defines the reason you exist to all your constituents - board, staff, donors, volunteers and the community-at-large. Your mission statement is what distinguishes your nonprofit from other social service nonprofits.

It is also true that a clear mission statement can help you to avoid mission-drift, which can divert you from achieving your fundamental goals.

In most cases the crucial role of ensuring a soup kitchen project adheres to its mission statement is that of a Board of Trustees or Board of Directors. In other cases, this role could be played by the organization founders or a core committee of dedicated volunteers.

Change as You Grow

As the project matures, it may become desirable to expand the core group, be it a committee or a formal board. The expansion process should be done in a strategic manner. You might consider utilizing a two-part job-matching approach to recruiting board members. Begin by defining the specific needs the organization has and then attempt to find individuals who possess the skills to fulfill those needs. Many boards have too many lawyers and bankers. You should cast a wide recruitment net to ensure diversity of talent and ethnicity. Helpful skills for prospective board members include fundraising ability, public relations and marketing, communications and media experience, logistics, food transportation and facilities

management expertise.

It is inevitable that the role of your board will change over time as your organization grows from being largely volunteer-based to having both paid and volunteer staff. During the early years of a soup kitchen a board often will, of necessity, assume certain hands-on duties that later become staff responsibilities as you grow. As the project grows, the lines of responsibility between staff and board need to be made very clear. The board determines the organization's mission and purpose, monitors programs, develops policy and has ultimate fiduciary responsibility. They should not become involved in day-to-day operations or personnel matters.

Further, as your soup kitchen grows over time, different board talents and expertise will be needed. You should also be cautious with regard to expanding a board too rapidly. Err on the side of incrementalism so as to not disrupt the existing board dynamic.

Attributes of Effective Board Leadership

A strong, dedicated board chair is absolutely crucial to an organization's success. The board chair needs to possess the assertiveness to lead (not necessarily aggressiveness) as well as the empathy necessary to promote the dialogue needed to forge consensus.

It is also very important that the person selected as board chair has a flexible schedule to enable him/her to respond to soup kitchen emergencies as they arise.

Every board chair should have a reliable number two or vice chair. The vice chair should be brought into every important matter and should be someone who is capable and comfortable to, at any time, step up in the chair's absence. The vice-chair is the person being groomed to become the next board chair.

Another important element of an effective board is to have an active, functioning committee structure with committee chairs who have appropriate expertise in the given area, if at all possible. Each board member should serve on at least one committee and the committees should meet regularly. It is the role of committees to review matters within their purview and to make recommendations to the full board for policy determinations. A listing of typical soup kitchen committees is given in Appendix B.

Another crucial goal for a board chair is to estab-

lish a collegial working partnership with the executive director. They need to develop a shared vision of the future they are seeking to create for the organization. The board chair and the executive director should meet faithfully at least once per month, just the two of them. In this meeting, the board chair should ensure that there is a good two-way dialogue.

Attributes of Effective Management Leadership

It is highly desirable that the director have managerial and administrative experience, preferably, but not necessarily, in a social service setting. Running a soup kitchen is running a business. It may be a nonprofit business, but it is a business.

It is also very important that the director have excellent verbal and written communication skills. The director should be the public face of the organization.

A reality of soup kitchen work is that key staff will be surrounded by trauma and sadness as they interact with the patron population. While it is necessary to have empathy and compassion for soup kitchen patrons, it is also important that staff practice self-care. One cannot take care of anyone else unless one takes care of one's self first – remember the airplane emergency video (put on your oxygen mask before putting on your child's mask).

Simply stated, it is important for staff to possess a combination of empathy and savvy - being good hearted but not naïve.

Strategic Plan

As the soup kitchen project matures, there will be a need to develop a strategic plan – a shared vision for the future. The strategic plan should be consistent with the agency's mission. It should set forth what you would like to accomplish in the future (goals and objectives) and how you intend to get there (strategies and implementation steps). The strategic plan becomes a blueprint that outlines the best way to accomplish your shared vision.

Offsite, weekend one day or half-day retreats can be useful for targeted tasks such as developing a strategic plan and monitoring annual progress in meeting goals and objectives. Once created, the strategic plan should be

updated every three to five years and referred to regularly.

Board & Management Leadership Tips

TIP #1 – Leaders of the soup kitchen must be above the fray and never become entangled with political campaigns or candidates running for public office. It is imperative to maintain nonpartisanship and be able to call on members of all political parties for help and support.

TIP #2 – It is important to provide strong support staff to avoid overloading the executive director. One way to accomplish this is to realize that management cannot have expertise in every area and that, from time to time, there may be a need to bring in outside experts or consultants. This allows key staff to concentrate on the ongoing operation and management of the organization. Areas where outside consultants can provide key support include software design, fundraising, kitchen design, and supervision of building construction.

TIP #3 – Do not seek funds for programs or new initiatives that are not consistent with your organization's core mission. Such activity will dilute your focus. Don't seek funding just because it is available.

TIP #4 – It is never too early to think about developing a succession plan for any organization. It is important to think in terms of who will succeed all key members of a soup kitchen project, for example the director, the board chair, and head cook.





chapter five

Marketing & Public Relations

Chapter 5: Marketing & Public Relations

When one thinks of starting a soup kitchen, one automatically thinks of food. However, strange as it may sound, another aspect that should be uppermost in your early considerations is that of marketing and public relations, both of which are key to volunteer recruitment and fundraising.

Given the sometimes hectic pace of daily operations at a soup kitchen, it is common to feel that there is just not enough time to do everything that needs to be done. But you should be careful in how you respond to this phenomenon because it can lead to a penny wise/pound foolish approach in the long run. Under such circumstances, it may be easy to dismiss marketing and public relations as needless tooting of one's own horn, but that would be a profound mistake. Failing to do a good job in these areas will negatively impact the effectiveness and long-term viability of your project. What follows are some practical suggestions for implementing a robust marketing and public relations program.

Start-Up Public Relations

To the extent possible, your soup kitchen launch strategy should take advantage of a wide spectrum of communications resources. T.V. and radio need to be brought into the picture in addition to a press release and news conference kick-off event to solicit funding and volunteers. You should invite media, local leaders in government and the faith-based community, and the non-profit sector. You should consider using blogs, Twitter and Facebook. In this day and age, if you're genuinely serious about getting your message out, these tools should be utilized right out of the gate.

In terms of publicity for soup kitchen patrons, the underground network or grapevine is very effective, but it is advisable to display large weather-resistant banner type signage providing the days and hours of the soup kitchen. This should be done weeks prior to the opening of the soup kitchen and should include a removable strip that

provides the date of start of operations. Depending on the patron population, these signs should be in English and Spanish. The message should indicate that all are welcome to come in and enjoy a meal.

Another early task is to create a one-page flyer and/or basic brochure and distribute it widely to the community (other nonprofits, food pantries, shelters, welfare and unemployment offices, houses of worship, etc.) via mailing and e-mailing. Try to have a photo on the brochure cover that tugs at the heart. Local libraries often allow nonprofits to display brochures in the lobby or the main reading room. Assign volunteers to ensure the supply of brochures is constantly refilled.

Ongoing Marketing & Public Relations

As soon as possible, once your soup kitchen is up and running, start building your mailing list and send out a newsletter. The newsletter is the prime vehicle for promoting the soup kitchen. Your newsletter should not be overly slick. You should strive to have a mix of human interest stories and thoughtful columns on the reality of poverty in your region. You should certainly describe and promote your good work. Focus on people. Include profiles of board members, volunteers and staff. Whenever possible, put a face on your work by doing patron interviews (you may need to change patron names to provide anonymity). As the project matures, publish the newsletter on a quarterly basis and mail it to all donors, volunteers and local leaders in the government and nonprofit sector. You should also make a real effort to broadcast your newsletter in electronic format and utilize e-blasts for quick news updates.

Become a media hound. Develop excellent relationships with newspaper editors, reporters, photographers, TV reporters, and radio hosts. Make a special effort to promptly return all phone or e-mail messages from the media as they are often on deadline.

As the soup kitchen project matures, you should be on constant look-out for events that are opportunities for press coverage. You need to make it a priority to have an on-going presence in local media. Typical examples of noteworthy events to publicize would be new programs, new board members, facility expansion, etc. The goal is to keep your project in the minds of the public at large.

You will want to develop good relations with lo-

cal elected officials and key government personnel such as the city business administrator or township manager and heads of departments that deal with social service programs. Other entities with which you should develop relations are your local schools and religious organizations.

In addition to talking about your meal service, the director should be an advocate in the community for soup kitchen programs that promote patron self-sufficiency and quality of life. The director should be very visible and be seen as a credible spokesperson in the region. The director is the face of the organization, not the board president or the director of development. The organization needs one voice on a day-to-day basis and particularly should a crisis arise. A consistent spokesperson helps to instill your message with the public.

Specific ways to accomplish public advocacy include writing op-ed pieces or letters to the editor for the local newspapers and readily accepting all TV and radio public service program interview invitations.

Related to the above, it is important to use multiple media to generate visibility and to reinforce your main message. In addition to promoting specific programs and events, you should generate background noise or “buzz” on the soup kitchen project. Strategies to accomplish this include, but are not limited to the following: billboard messages, 8 ½ x 11-inch posters on store windows and library bulletin boards, appearances on local cable TV public affairs interview programs, public service announcements (PSAs) in local newspapers, point-of-purchase countertop display boards.

An important part of your message should be that your organization is frugal and prudent in all of its operations. Stress that you are prudent stewards of all donations to the soup kitchen. This message and philosophy should be emphasized in all promotional material and through word and action.

If possible, create a soup kitchen website. Keep it lively and current. Use it to begin capturing volunteer and donor e-mail addresses. You can offer the newsletter via postal or e-mail depending on the recipient’s preference. As news events occur, consider communicating via e-mail blasts.

As the project matures, it will become important to develop more advanced marketing strategies utilizing the power of the Internet. Social media is everywhere. It encompasses blogs, social networks (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, Friendster and MySpace), professional networking portals such as LinkedIn, creative sites like Flickr, a pho-

tography-sharing website, and sites offering online news such as Patch.com. These websites are particularly popular among the 18-to 30-year-old set, but among others as well. Increasingly, the electronic venue will become the medium of choice for telling the community why your soup kitchen exists and how people can join in its noble work.

Marketing & Public Relations Tips

TIP #1 – A bar chart or line graph that shows the numbers of meals you are serving over time is an excellent tool to keep the public aware of your project.

TIP #2 – Consistency of message in all your promotional material is important. In general, you need between six to sixteen exposures to make an impression in the mind of the average person.

TIP #3 – If a local newspaper does a favorable story on your soup kitchen, reprint it in your newsletter and post it on your website. Not only does this save you writing and editing work, but stories that appear elsewhere lend credibility to your organization.

TIP #4 – To maximize soup kitchen exposure, consider using social networking sites that are aimed at special racial or ethnic groups. Some examples are the following: Black Planet (www.blackplanet.com), MiGente (www.migente.com), MyBatanga (batanga.com/) and AsianAve (www.asianave.com), as well as religious audiences such as FaithBase (www.faithbase.com) and MuslimSocial (www.muslimsocial.com).

TIP #5 – As mentioned above, Twitter (www.twitter.com) can be an effective online marketing tool. It is freely available and is sometimes called “micro blogging.” You have 140 characters to get your message across. Twitter can help get your message out, but equally important, it allows instant feedback by facilitating two-way conversations.

TIP #6 – If a crisis should occur (food-borne illness, funding cuts, damage to the facility, etc.) it is important that one person be authorized to speak on behalf of the organization to the press and that that person be forthcoming and truthful. The person should demonstrate the organization’s concern and determination to resolve the crisis. Every effort should be made to protect the privacy of the soup kitchen patrons.



chapter six

Food Acquisition & Food Safety

Chapter 6: Food Acquisition & Food Safety

We now come to the critical subject of acquiring food and handling food in a safe and sanitary manner. This is such important subject matter that each of these topics will be described in its own section.

Food Acquisition

After determining the location and facility of your soup kitchen, the next challenging issue is that of food acquisition. It is likely that your group of founders will also initially be the food providers and the cooking staff for your meals. In order to obtain the lowest possible costs when you shop for food you should investigate purchasing from bulk discount stores. You should also look into other food purveyors in your community who might be able to offer you volume pricing, or preferred pricing given the food is being used for charitable purposes. You should also investigate opportunities for food rescue (also known as food recovery) from area restaurants, supermarkets (day old bread, pastry and fruit) and from corporate and school cafeterias, but be mindful that transporting perishable food comes with risk.

Once your soup kitchen has established itself somewhat, you will want to become a member of your local affiliate of Feeding America, the nation's food bank network. As a member you will be able to access donated food and groceries, as well purchased food and groceries. The bulk of the food will be available at costs dramatically below wholesale. Much will be free. Some will have a modest fee that covers the food bank's cost of warehousing, handling and transporting the food or an annual membership and transportation fee.

You will also want to participate in The Federal Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) that helps supplement the diets of low-income Americans by providing emergency food at no cost. Food is provided through the states to food banks, which in turn distribute to local agencies such as soup kitchens that directly serve the public.

It should be noted that both Feeding America and TEFAP commodities are not available to start-up opera-

tions for an initial period of three to six months.

Having a group of volunteers glean previously harvested farm fields can generate a surprising amount of high-quality vegetables. Items such as white or sweet potatoes and carrots have a long shelf life and are especially easy items to glean. Other good sources of food are local citrus, apple and pear orchards.

The federal "Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act of 1996" promotes food recovery and gleaning by limiting potential liability of donors. Specifically, donors are not subject to civil or criminal liability arising from the nature, age, packaging, or condition of apparently wholesome food in the absence of donor's negligence or intentional misconduct.

Food Acquisition Tips

TIP # 1 – A good source of food is to encourage targeted food drives for specific items such as tuna fish, canned vegetables and soup, peanut butter, coffee, and pasta. Whenever possible request larger cans (#10 size) to reduce the labor of opening them. Canned vegetables and soups can oftentimes be combined to make nutritious stews.

TIP # 2 – Having an individual or group of individuals plant a garden is another way to provide nutritious fresh vegetables.

TIP # 3 – Another means of food acquisition is to ask local school groups, business offices or scout troops to purchase or collect ingredients and to prepare brown bag meals. However, you are at risk when you do not know how food is handled off-site or whether food safety standards are followed. Perishable foods such as sandwiches or casseroles prepared by outsiders should be accepted with extreme caution and you need assurances that food safety rules were adhered to in the preparation, handling and transport of the food to your site.

TIP # 4 – A similar food acquisition idea is to ask outside groups to purchase and prepare ingredients for next-day breakfast bags for the children. The bags would contain a cereal box, a small bag of dried milk or a container of non-refrigerated milk, a piece of fruit, and a juice pack. Over time this kind of project could expand into backpack meals for the children to take home for the weekend.

TIP # 5 – Another source of supplemental food is to ask volunteers to purchase and prepare baggies of

trail mix for patrons. This is a volunteer friendly activity and bags are easy to make. It is essential that you stress that sanitary gloves be used when assembling the bags; otherwise, the donation cannot be accepted. Trail mix is high in calories and protein, but unfortunately, also can be somewhat high in sugar.

Food Safety

One of the most important issues that a soup kitchen faces is that of food safety and sanitation. Some of the rules guiding the safe handling of food are no more than common sense, but discipline and diligence are required to ensure good practices are always followed. The paragraphs that follow are not meant to be a substitute for formal training in the subject, but rather to provide a brief overview of food safety issues and protocol.

Early in your project planning you should apply to your local municipal health department for licensing and certification as a public food service facility. In addition to obtaining the local health department permit, municipal inspections should also include fire safety (fire alarms, smoke detectors and/or fire suppression systems).

You should ensure that those in charge of food preparation have formal Food Safety and Sanitation training. This will be a requirement for membership with your local Feeding America food bank. These courses are usually offered at local community colleges. This training should also be periodically updated. Preventing food borne illness is crucial and particularly important serving a patron population who may have compromised immune systems.

Some of the more important food safety rules are:

- Temperature control of potentially hazardous food products must be kept above 140 degrees F or below 40 degrees F. Food between these two temperatures is in what is known as “the danger zone”.
- Proper hand washing is critical. Wash with soap and water and rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds, scrubbing front and backs of hands, wrists, and between fingers and under fingernails. Rinse well, dry hands with a clean or disposable towel or hot air dryer and use a disposable towel to turn off faucets.
- Hand sanitizers for staff, volunteers and patrons help to ensure good hygiene practices.
- Proper use and washing of kitchen tools and cut-

ting boards is mandatory to prevent cross-contamination between food products.

- Kitchen workers and servers should wear sanitary aprons, hats or hairnets and gloves.
- If food is being prepared by an outside group, it is important to ensure that such groups stringently follow fundamental food safety procedures.
- Inspection of food donations is important. Some of the more obvious concerns are food discoloration or odor, dented, rusted, leaking, bulging or open cans and bottles, expired date codes, moldy bread or pastry, and items that appear to have been thawed and refrozen. Do not accept food that has been sitting out for hours, such as leftovers from a company picnic or office party. The general rule is, “If in doubt, throw it out!”

It is important to assign someone to monitor the restrooms to ensure that they always have enough hand soap and paper towels. Given that some of your patrons may be homeless, they may use your restrooms as a wash room. A certain amount of this activity is unavoidable and can result in heavy use of soap and towels. Restrooms should be also inspected for cleanliness several times during meal service. You might also consider installing wall mounted hand sanitizers in the dining room.

As your soup kitchen project becomes more established, you should determine whether you need a food transport van. If you are accepting food that can spoil quickly if not kept below 40 degrees F, you may need to acquire a refrigerated van. You also should utilize insulated containers or freezer blankets to keep food hot or cold. You might consider soliciting the donation of the van from a local automobile or truck dealer.

Vermin and pest control is extremely important. Left-over food must be properly stored or thrown away lest it attract rodents. Overall facility cleanliness is crucial. If you don't keep on top of vermin and insects, they can quickly get out of hand. Pest control guidelines should be established including regular service visits by pest control specialists.

Food Safety Tips

TIP # 1 – Some food donations from family, company or civic organization functions may have been exposed to non-hygienic conditions. Be especially wary of summer picnics where food may not have been refriger-



chapter seven

Food Service

Chapter 7: Food Service

We now come to the very heart of a soup kitchen – the serving of the meal. It is the culmination of all your hard work in finding a location, acquiring food, raising funds, recruiting volunteers, and so forth. Food service at a soup kitchen shares much with food service in any restaurant, except that there is no bill for the diner at the end of the meal. Serving the meal can simultaneously be the most challenging and the most rewarding of all your tasks. What follows are some lessons learned from serving some 2,500,000 plus meals at TASK and Loaves and Fishes.

Logistics of Serving the Meal

You will need to determine your method for serving patrons, that is, whether they will come down a cafeteria line or whether they will be served while seated at tables. If you have enough volunteers, table service is a nice touch for patrons who often are not treated with hospitality elsewhere.

You should assign someone to be a greeter/floor manager whose job it is to help with seating as patrons enter the dining room. This person is the eyes and ears of the soup kitchen and is often the first point of contact if problems arise (this subject will be discussed further in Chapters 12 and 13 - Patron Relations and Safety and Security). The floor manager role could be assigned to paid staff, a skilled volunteer or even the soup kitchen director.

What to Serve

Planning nutritious meals is an important responsibility of a soup kitchen. Low-income populations generally eat inexpensive foods that have low nutritional value and high fat, salt and sugar content. As a result, many patrons at soup kitchens suffer from chronic health conditions such as diabetes and high blood pressure. These conditions can be mitigated and lessened through healthy dietary choices.

Similarly, there are certain foods, such as fresh fruit and produce, that low-income populations seldom

eat because they are too costly or not sold at local markets and bodegas. Serving these food items is a good way of providing otherwise unavailable food. Fresh fruits and vegetables are always preferable to canned fruits in heavy syrups or sodium-filled canned vegetables. Fruits and vegetables can be purchased in season locally and then frozen to be served during the winter months.

While ensuring that your meals are nutritious and balanced, you should try to accommodate patron ethnicities and tastes. You also need to be mindful that some patrons, because of cultural and religious customs, will not be able to eat certain types of food, for example, Muslims and Jews do not eat pork. If you are serving pork because you have secured it as a donation, it is good to have a substitute or, alternatively, you could suggest your patrons pass on the main entrée in favor of salad, bread and fruit. Another typical menu variation would be to serve collard greens, a favorite of African-American patrons, with turkey sausage instead of bacon or pork. It is a more healthful way to cater to patron tastes.

You should avoid serving drinks that have high sugar content. Some will argue that it is harmful to offer high-sugar content items to a population at risk of contracting diabetes. Others argue the choice of whether to drink these items belongs with the patrons.

Similarly, you should discuss portion size of your meals. There is a tendency in many restaurants today to serve super-sized meals that can exacerbate the risk of obesity and diabetes. However, for many patrons the soup kitchen meal is their only meal of the day, which would tend to make you want to serve a large portion. TASK policy is to serve an adequate and reasonable portion.

Food Service Policies

You should determine what your policy will be with respect to serving second portions. If you have extra food and can accommodate seconds, that is the preferred approach. However, in some cases the dining room can become overcrowded if you provide seconds so the specifics of your demand and size of your dining room will guide you.

You also need to decide what your policy will be regarding left-over food. There are at least three options: provide take-home trays for patrons, deliver meals to the local overnight shelter or senior citizen facility, or distribute to the volunteers.

You should determine the threshold age for vol-

unteers in the kitchen. Volunteer assignments should be done strategically (this subject will be treated in more detail in Chapter 11: Volunteer Recruitment and Management).

Make it your policy to stress cleanliness. Trash removal is a part of food service operations. Ensure that someone is responsible for bussing tables and transporting trash bags to a dumpster.

Food Service Tips

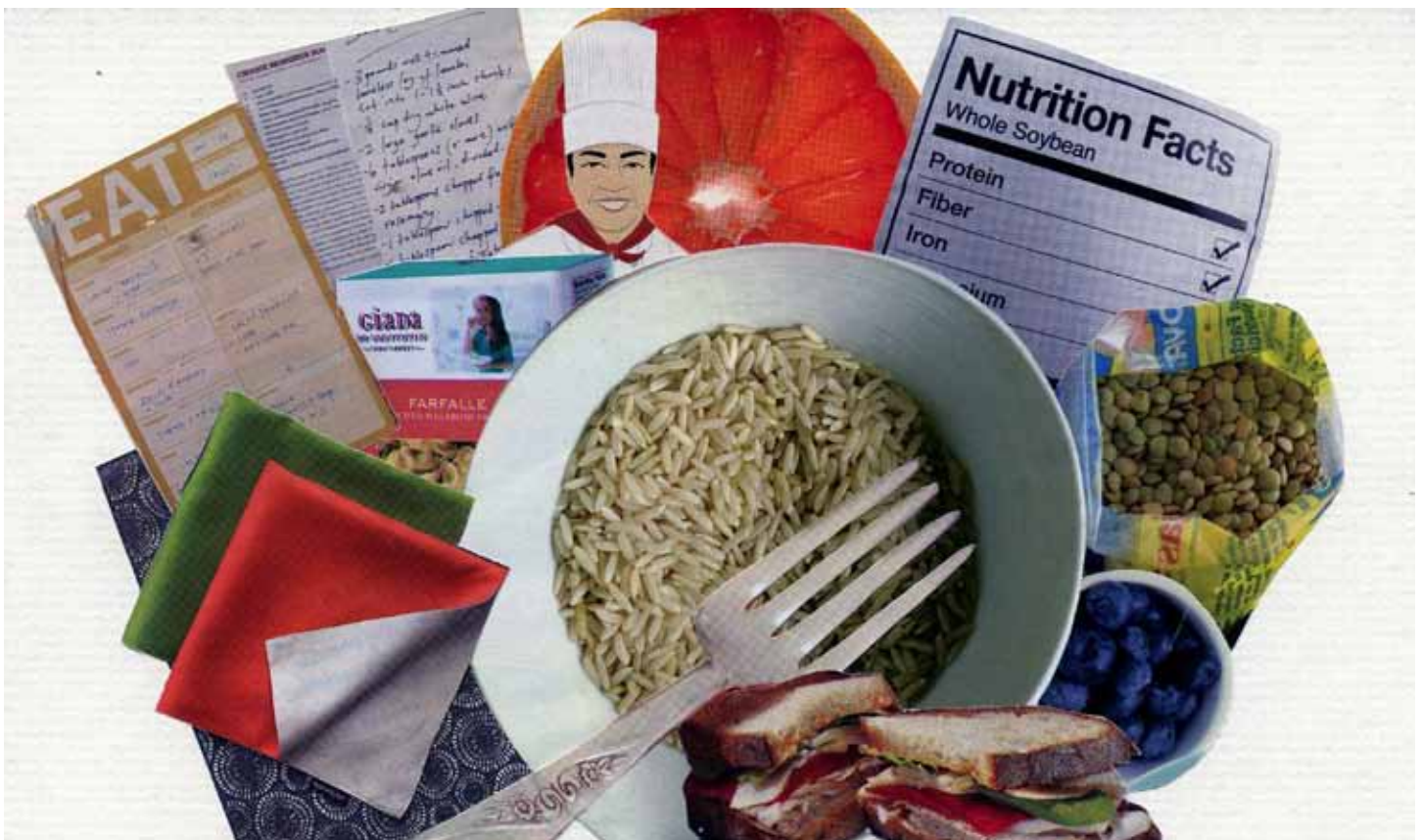
TIP # 1 – You may want to provide takeout meals for patrons who do not have the time or inclination to sit down for a meal. Takeout meals should be delivered hot, wrapped in aluminum foil (despite the expense of the foil) and consumed within two hours of receipt.

TIP # 2 – Halloween and Easter candy donations are typical. You should determine how much of these kinds of donations you want to accept and should provide them to patrons in small amounts since they are saturated with sugar. Also, be mindful that your patrons rarely, if ever, see a dentist.

TIP # 3 – Determine whether you want to use silverware and serve meals on plates or whether you should use plastic ware and foam plates. TASK elects to use plastic ware and foam plates. Although this may not be optimum from an environmental standpoint, it reduces the need for intensive dishwashing and minimizes theft. Silverware and porcelain plates can also become a safety issue.

TIP # 4 – If resources permit or if you can secure donations, providing table clothes and flowers on each table is a nice touch. Yet another way to provide an attractive environment is to display pictures, paintings, and posters on the walls. The art work could even be paintings done by some of your patrons. Also, posters and paintings can be obtained inexpensively at thrift stores.

TIP # 5 – As your soup kitchen grows, you will want to count the number of meals served. It is good information for volunteers, for ordering supplies and for marketing purposes. An easy way to do meal counts is to use a hand clicker. Other counting methods include handing out tickets or counting the number of plates used.





chapter eight

Financial Management

Chapter 8:

Financial Management

Before you can begin to raise the funds you need to operate or expand your soup kitchen, there are three main financial management tools you will need to put in place to help you to be good stewards of donations and expenditures and to execute your mission in a fiscally responsible and transparent manner:

1. An accounting system that tracks your income and expenses
2. A budget that reflects your priorities and projects income and expenses
3. Policies and procedures that provide for strong financial controls

As a nonprofit organization, your budget and IRS Tax Form 990 are public documents and will be available to be scrutinized by the public and organizations that rate nonprofits.

Accounting System

You will need to put in place an accounting system that is easy to use and accurately tracks income and expenses. Many startup soup kitchens start with a manual bookkeeping system staffed by a volunteer or a part-time bookkeeper. If your agency has a computer, you should consider using a simple accounting system such as QuickBooks for Nonprofits. Computerizing your bookkeeping function will enable you to quickly generate budgets and internal reports.

The holiday season (beginning with Thanksgiving and running to the end of the year), is when most soup kitchens see the bulk of their individual and corporate contributions. It is important to be ready to handle the increased accounting workload during this period. People like to receive their thank you letters very early in the New Year for tax purposes.

It is imperative that you retain a certified public accountant to perform an independent annual audit of your organization's finances and to produce the annual financial statement and IRS Form 990. Most funders re-

quire an audit as a precondition for awarding grants.

It is crucial that the Board take affirmative action with regard to any audit exceptions or recommendations contained in the audit. These are red flags that funders will look at and want to see resolved prior to providing funds.

Budgeting

Your budget is testimony to the degree to which you are adhering to your mission statement and priorities and should be based on a realistic projection of fundraising.

The development of the first draft of the annual budget is generally the responsibility of soup kitchen administrative staff. If the board has a finance committee, it should review the proposed budget prior to submission to the full board for approval. In that case, the presentation to the board should be made by the chair of the finance committee, who may also be the agency treasurer.

It is easier to work on a fiscal year basis (July to June) as opposed to the calendar year; the latter forces the budget process to proceed at the busy holiday time and before you know how much money you raised in your end-of-year campaign.

Expenditures against each line item in the budget should be monitored on a monthly basis by staff and presented to the board at each board meeting by the agency treasurer. If spending or fundraising projections are not met, corrective actions should be instituted.

Financial Control Policies & Procedures

Adequate financial controls depend on checks and balances by multiple individuals. No single individual should have overlapping responsibilities in the oversight of the agency's finances. For example, the same person should not be in charge of both making sure that hours are correctly logged and writing payroll checks.

In this regard, you should also establish a policy for handling donations of cash and checks. To ensure adequate controls and oversight, two people should be assigned responsibility for the opening and documenting of all monetary donations.

A policy should be established that sets forth the frequency with which bank deposits should be made. Cash

and check donations should not be allowed to sit around.

The board should establish a policy as to the size of the financial reserve; that is, what is the minimum balance the board is seeking to maintain? While some soup kitchens live month to month, a six month's reserve is generally considered to be the desired minimum. Having a very large reserve could impact fundraising since funders generally want the bulk of their grants to be used for the delivery of services, not for the building of a large reserve.

You should establish a policy for securing multiple estimates for major purchases. This policy should also include significant service contracts such as HVAC, security, pest control, etc. It is generally the responsibility of the board to approve all major contracts with outside vendors and consultants (see Appendix C for a list of typical soup kitchen vendors).

Check signing policies for invoice payments should be established defining who signs and what the threshold is for requiring two signatures. In this regard, you may need to have more than two people authorized in case one person is not available when needed. In addition, a decision should be made regarding the magnitude of purchases that can be made without board approval. The amount will vary depending on the size of the agency budget. For small agencies with operating budgets less than \$50,000, purchase limits of \$500 might be appropriate. For larger agencies with budgets of \$1,000,000 plus, a much higher limit is appropriate.

As the soup kitchen grows, you will need to determine whether the agency will have a credit card and who will be able to use it. Your policy should provide for adequate controls but not hamstringing employees from making necessary or emergency purchases.

The board will want to put in place a conflict-of-interest policy which makes it clear that board membership carries no right to preferential treatment in the placement or handling of investments or business accounts.

As mentioned above, as the soup kitchen grows,

one of the committees of the board should be a finance committee. Additional committees in the financial area can be an audit committee and an investment committee. These committees can be composed entirely of board members or a combination of board members and experts from the community at large.

Financial Management Tips

TIP # 1 – A particular challenge to financial control in a soup kitchen is that of security. It is very important that financial donations be handled in a secure manner away from the patron population. Exacerbating this problem is the fact that most start-up soup kitchens will probably depend on volunteer labor to process donations.

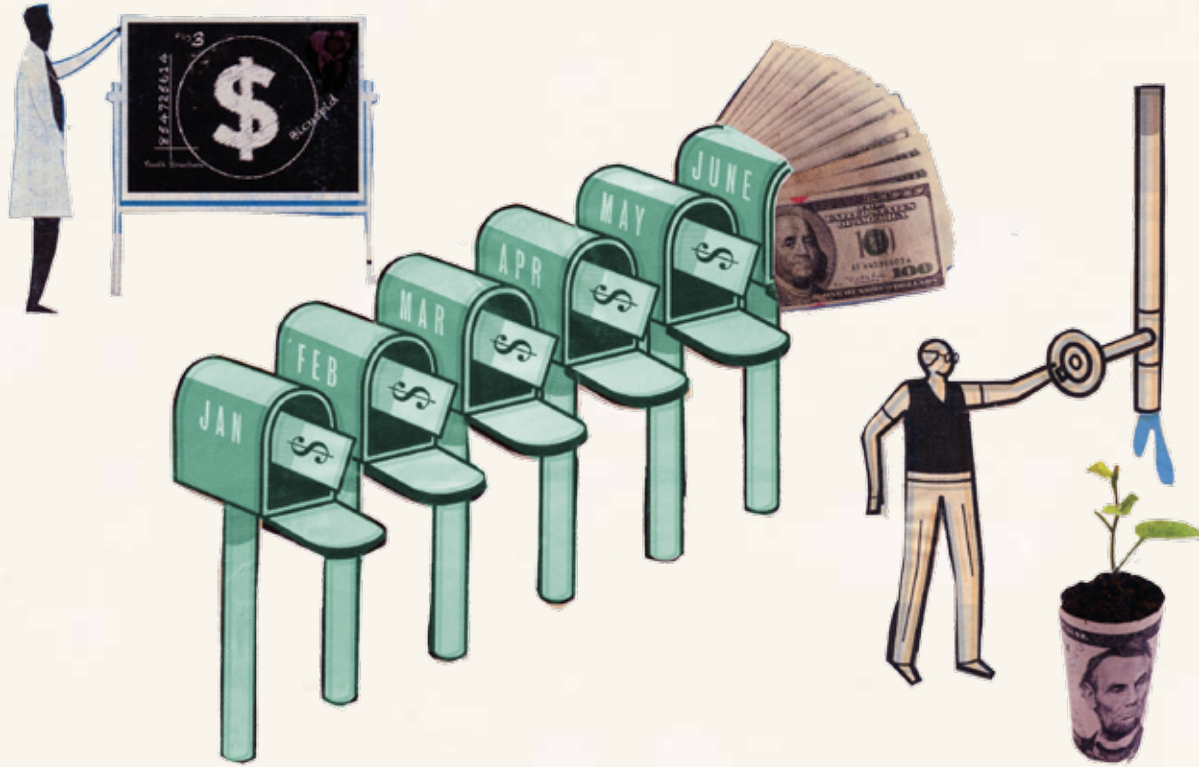
TIP # 2 – You should try to get preferred rates or free (pro bono) services from vendors and suppliers. But you should also realize that free is not always better. You must use judgment as to which services you pay for and which you receive pro bono.

TIP # 3 – You should attempt to get in-kind donations such as food, furniture, paint, vehicles, file cabinets, and office supplies from local companies. Similarly, your municipality may be a source of free services such as trash removal and security.

TIP # 4 – When appropriate and feasible, joint purchasing arrangements with other nonprofits should be explored. However, the cost of storage and dispersal of common staples needs to be considered in determining the benefits of such arrangements. Administrative costs for managing inventory and distribution can easily become burdensome and costly.

TIP # 5 – You should consider establishing a line-of-credit with your bank for major expansion of services, facility renovation or contingencies that may arise.





chapter nine

Fundraising & Development

Chapter 9: Fundraising & Development

Fundraising, also known as development, is pivotal to any nonprofit enterprise. However, fundraising can be a challenge for soup kitchen founders since they are generally focused on the preparation and service of a nutritious meal. Fundraising is integrally related to marketing and public relations (see Chapter 5). People generally don't donate to entities with which they are not familiar and to which they are not favorably disposed.

Another reason why people don't donate is that they are never asked. In asking for support, it is important to convey that your services are meeting basic needs for people living in poverty. You should always make your requests personal and tell prospective donors how their gift will specifically help to alleviate the pain and indignity of hunger. You should also emphasize that you deliver all your services in a fiscally prudent manner.

A Shared Responsibility

The question often arises – who is really responsible for fundraising – board or staff? While it is true that the board has ultimate responsibility for the health of the organization, fundraising is fundamentally a dual responsibility shared with staff and, in practice, most fundraising activities generally fall to staff; while not all board members will be skilled in all aspects of fundraising, involving board members will increase your overall fundraising capacity. To start with, you should make sure you can say that 100% of your board members are donors. It's not the magnitude of their donation, but the percentage of participation that's important, and 100% participation is sought by most funders. Board members should be schooled on the delivery of a short presentation on the history and importance of the soup kitchen; this is sometimes referred to as the “elevator speech”.

While fundraising is a shared responsibility, it is important that there is a singular face for the soup kitchen and that face should be the director. He/she should be the prime spokesperson.

As your soup kitchen matures, you should consider creating a board fundraising committee and schedule regular meetings with agenda, assigned action items, and minutes. Realize that having such a committee will invariably require significant staff time.

At some point, it may become important to provide additional staff support for fundraising. Alternative models of fundraising support include hiring a development director or contracting with a fundraising consultant.

Stewardship

You should emphasize stewardship and prudent handling of donations in all your promotional material. An important goal is to keep general, administrative and fundraising expenses to a reasonable level (less than 20%) relative to program services.

There are a number of nonprofit rating agencies such as Charity Navigator and Guidestar that provide data on the percentage of donations that go to direct program support. More and more people are referring to such evaluators. Therefore, you should strive to earn a high (four star) rating and then publicize that fact in all your promotional material.

A Comprehensive Approach to Fundraising

At the outset, your best fundraising prospects are your family, colleagues, co-workers, friends, religious leaders, employers, business associates, neighbors, and high school or college classmates.

Don't neglect your volunteers as prospects. They have first-hand knowledge of your work. Don't assume that since they have already given of their time, you can't ask them for money. Again, the primary reason folks do not donate is they have not been asked.

There are many fundraising strategies - face to face appeal, phone calls, personal letters, special events, and mass direct mail. The direct mail category includes annual appeal letters, new donor letters, and lapsed donor letters.

It is important not to become too dependent on any one fundraising source, be it government, corporate,

foundation, a single large individual donor, religious institutions, or events. It is best to have a widely diversified funding base.

Keep in mind that over 80% of all non-governmental funding for nonprofits comes from individual donors. You should work at building, maintaining and reviewing your donor data base on a regular basis. If donor stops giving, you should aggressively try to reactivate them. It is much more cost-effective to reactivate a former donor than it is to secure a brand new donor. You should also ensure that all your volunteers are in the donor data base.

Existing donors are your most valuable resource. They need to be cultivated and communicated with on a regular basis. Although building relationship with individual donors is very time intensive, try to schedule personal visits to all prospective and existing high end donors. Offer them ways to help beyond monetary donations, for example, underwriting a publication, funding a piece of equipment, or underwriting a “lapsed donor” or new acquisition mailing. Invite your donors to do site visits and allow them the opportunity to talk to patrons and volunteers.

Make sure your thank you letters go out in a timely fashion, particularly for end of year donations. Some donors get nervous because they think they need your letter to complete income tax forms (actually only needed for donations above \$250 according to 2010 IRS regulations.)

Conducting a construction (capital) or endowment campaign will not necessarily cannibalize your normal fundraising activities. In fact, special initiatives can expand the donor base.

Even if you do everything right, you will lose donors every year. People die or move away, companies go out of business, people and organizations change their priorities, donor fatigue sets in and there are cyclical downturns in the economy. That is why you should undertake new donor acquisition efforts to add to your donor base. To mount a new donor acquisition effort, you need a list of names of potential donors. There are com-

mercial entities known as list houses that can help you define and target new donors. As your soup kitchen grows, you can also utilize mail shops that perform bulk tasks such as folding, stuffing and mailing. Bear in mind that new donor acquisitions can be costly and that your goal is to cover expenses of the new donor solicitation and build up your donor base.

Fundraising Tips

TIP # 1 – You should include a remittance envelope in all your newsletters. The envelope flap should indicate what different levels of giving will provide in terms of meals and other services. You also should put a code on the envelope so you know which appeal the donation came from. As your soup kitchen matures and your donor base grows you should include the option to make donations via credit card or online.

TIP # 2 – Don't be reluctant to ask existing donors to make multiple annual donations. Existing donors are your best source of additional contributions. They support your organization because they believe in your work, so tell them what else you can do with additional funds.

TIP # 3 – Compared to other strategies, fundraising by sponsoring events can be very labor intensive and return on investment small. It is important to determine how much of your time events will consume as well as the hidden time of others. If you do stage an event, in addition to ticket purchase, provide guests with additional support opportunities in addition to ticket purchase, such as silent auctions, gift auctions, and raffles.

TIP # 4 – State and federal government each have check-off programs for public employees to select amounts to be deducted from each paycheck and donated to a United Way agency or other approved nonprofits. If you are in a community with government offices, you should see whether you meet requirements to be a check-off agency. If you qualify, you should try to develop strong relations with public employee unions to boost donations to your agency.



chapter ten

Staff Management

Chapter 10: Staff Management

This chapter will address the subject of the management of paid staff although many of the issues herein also apply to an all-volunteer staff or a mix of paid and volunteer staff. Indeed, most soup kitchens start out with an all-volunteer staff. Specific practices and procedures for working with volunteers are covered in more detail in Chapter 11 – Volunteer Recruitment & Management.

The Soup Kitchen Team

Soup kitchens tend to have a small staff that is required to perform as a team. As such, it is important for all employees to be team players and to realize that every person on the team is important and essential to the operation.

In all cases soup kitchen staff should be empathetic toward patrons and sensitive to the circumstances of the needy. Staff should be flexible and willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done. It is also very important that staff be able to work well with volunteers.

If you are able, it is best to have at least one strong second-in-command staff person as back-up for the executive director. It goes a long way to reducing director burn-out. One way to address the dangers of staff burn-out is to enlist the aid of an external employee assistance program. EAPs offer a wide range of supportive services and counseling to help staff with the many challenges they may face at the soup kitchen. These services can also be useful in employee performance improvement programs.

Specific Staff Positions

There are specific staff positions that are core to the working of a soup kitchen. The staffing model for most mature soup kitchens would generally include the following key positions: director, floor manager, volunteer coordinator, receptionist, head cook or chef, bookkeeper, custodian, and van driver.

In reality, one or two of the founders of a start-up soup kitchen may wear multiple hats in performing the above roles. However, as the soup kitchen grows, these positions will require the dedicated time of one individual.

Key attributes for each of these positions are discussed below:

The director is the team leader, the ultimate authority, and the one at whose desk the buck stops. Sometimes the directorship can be shared between two people, particularly in a start-up operation. A soup kitchen director is a very hands-on position requiring budgetary, purchasing and management skills. It is also important for the director to have good verbal and written communication skills.

The director should be the public face of the organization. It is very helpful for the director to have had previous business experience. Running a nonprofit is, in many ways, akin to operating a small business – business acumen is needed. The director of a soup kitchen, or any other agency for that matter, should be a good listener and should solicit staff input on soup kitchen operations.

The floor manager greets soup kitchen patrons as they enter. This is a central role that sets the tone for the dining room. The floor manager ensures that meals are served efficiently and courteously. It is critical that the floor manager possess good people skills with a mix of empathy and savvy.

The volunteer coordinator may initially be a volunteer, but as the soup kitchen matures this can easily become a full-time job. This person is responsible for ensuring the optimum number of volunteers to serve the meal. Too many as well as too few volunteers can become an operational burden. This position requires someone who is detail oriented and has good administrative skills.

The chef/kitchen supervisor/head cook is a critical staff position. While culinary skills are important, people skills are just as important.

The receptionist is the initial contact and therefore can be the face of the soup kitchen for those who call or visit. The receptionist should have a pleasant phone manner and be able to answer basic questions about the soup kitchen, while referring more detailed questions to other staff.

The bookkeeper is responsible for accounts payable (expenses), accounts receivable (income), maintaining the general ledger as well as the payroll function.

The custodian is responsible for cleanliness of the dining room, the rest rooms and trash disposal. The custodian shares responsibility for kitchen cleanliness with the cooking staff.

The van driver is a position that a start-up soup kitchen may not be able to initially fill, but as the soup

kitchen grows a dedicated driver will become necessary to pick up food and other donations. In hiring such an individual, it is important to determine that the applicant has a clean driving record. Other requirements are that the person be reliable and have good people skills.

Compensation & Hiring

As your soup kitchen becomes more financially able, you should try hard to provide a competitive living wage to all employees as well as a decent benefits package (vacation, sick leave, holidays, health insurance, etc.). The work being done at a soup kitchen is very important work. It should be done well and be compensated accordingly. It makes no sense to advocate for social and human services for those in need and not be a good employer.

Hiring of employees should be done on a probationary basis, since some potential problems are not evident early on. A three to six month probationary period is good management practice. You should do general background checks (and where appropriate, criminal background checks) for all new prospective employees. You should also obviously check on the driving records for potential van drivers. It is desirable to try to fill some of your lower level positions with former patrons. If you do so, you should recognize that the criminal background check may uncover activities that you may want to individually evaluate.

If they are available, you should strongly consider bringing on so-called hybrid employees such as student interns, work-study students, welfare-to-work participants, and AmeriCorps and VISTA members (some of whom receive scholarships to work at a nonprofit). All these “employees” can perform important work that helps to supplement the efforts of regular staff.

Training & Supervision

Employee training is an important part of running a soup kitchen. It not only increases the skill level of your staff, but is also a morale boost for employees. Since most soup kitchens are small, sending an individual employee to a class or seminar requires planning to back-fill their duties. Retreats can also be used for staff training and team building.

Obvious kinds of training for soup kitchen personnel include in-service food safety and sanitation train-

ing as well as self-care training for staff working directly with those living in poverty. Staff burn-out is a very real danger when operating a soup kitchen. Staff members need to be resilient. Working closely with people living in poverty can sometimes be distressing. Employees of a soup kitchen need to practice self-care so that they do not become overwhelmed with the circumstances of the individuals they are serving. Staff members also need the ego strength to be able to say no to some patron requests such as for money or rides.

The pace of a soup kitchen can be very hectic. Despite this, it is important for the director to conduct frequent staff meetings. You should give people the big picture, tell them of all the good things that are happening and the challenges that the organization as a whole must address.

As the soup kitchen grows, you should formalize some of your personnel practices, such as creating an employee manual with job descriptions, performance appraisals, performance improvement programs, and grievance and termination procedures. All these processes should be done in a businesslike manner.

Staff Management Tips

TIP #1 – At times you should consider hiring per diem staff. This can be a more economical approach than hiring part-time staff to perform occasional duties such as quickly sending out thank-you notes in response to year-end donations.

TIP #2 – Utilizing contract employees or short-term consultants can also reduce fringe benefit costs. Such positions can be useful for construction projects and renovations or special fundraising initiatives such as capital or endowment campaigns.

TIP #3 – In addition to the duties stated above, the director should be available for occasional weekend and evening speaking engagements. Encourage board members, other staff and volunteers to share these assignments.

TIP #4 – Succession planning is necessary to accommodate retirements or departures for all critical staff positions particularly as your staff ages.



chapter eleven

Volunteer Recruitment & Management

Chapter 11: Volunteer Recruitment & Management

Volunteers are the life blood of a soup kitchen. Most soup kitchens would not be able to survive if they had to pay for all the work that volunteers perform. Volunteers know the agency, are committed to it, and are your best potential donors.

Volunteer Recruitment

Just as in fundraising, the first rule of recruiting volunteers is to ask. You should cast a broad net when seeking volunteers – seek all backgrounds, races, ethnicities, religions and generations.

Sources of volunteers include religious groups, area businesses, civic and service organizations, business and professional groups, retirement communities, unions, families and friends, public and private high schools, and college students. When recruiting volunteers you may find some who are reluctant to drive to an unfamiliar part of town. One way to deal with that concern is to suggest that groups come in their own van. You should also try to get volunteer groups to commit to a regular, repeating schedule (e.g., the first Wednesday of every month).

Corporations look for projects that will engage large employee groups at one time, e.g., serving the meal, restocking the pantry, or doing a painting project. Utilizing corporate volunteers can often lead to corporate donations and also financial support from the individuals who volunteer.

Occasionally you may have an outside group volunteer to adopt the soup kitchen for the day. Typical group activities would be to decorate the dining room and provide food, bag lunches, and hygiene articles. Staff should provide guidance to these groups as to how best distribute the donations in a way that ensures control and does not disturb meal service.

Try not to overbook volunteers – you don't want them standing around with nothing to do. If, on a given day, you find you have too many volunteers, consider providing a sit-down meal where the volunteers act as waiters and waitresses.

Volunteer Instructions

When planning a volunteer visit, remember that all volunteers are entitled to clear expectations, good working conditions, and appropriate supervision. You should tell them what specific tasks they will be performing, what time you expect them to arrive and what time they will be finished. Make sure to remind volunteers to eat before coming to the soup kitchen – you don't want anyone fainting due to low blood sugar. Additional information to provide is what to wear and what not to wear – examples of the latter are open-toed shoes or flip-flops and halter tops. You should also have a minimum age policy such as no children younger than 13 - you are not running a childcare service.

You should instruct volunteers that upon arrival at the soup kitchen, they should ensure their cars are empty and locked. They should not be seen stowing valuables in the trunk of their vehicles. If you are serving an evening meal, it is important to have a well lit parking lot.

When volunteers enter the building, they should be greeted and asked to sign-in. A nice touch is to provide self-adhesive name tags – first names are best. Volunteer valuables such as cell phones, pocketbooks, and outer garments should be stored in a secure place.

Before volunteers begin their duties, they should receive a thorough orientation including the following:

Introduction:

- Thanks for coming
- Short history of the soup kitchen
- Brief discussion of poverty

Volunteer instructions:

- How many they will be serving; specific duties
- Service with a smile; people respond in kind
- Inappropriate behavior (by anyone) is not tolerated and should be immediately reported to staff management
- Proper boundaries; no money, no gifts, no rides

Conclusion:

- Questions and answers
- Pass around sign-up sheet – names, addresses, e-mail addresses, phone numbers to be entered into data base for newsletters, etc.

Based on the specific needs of the day and a quick assessment of the volunteer group, you will now make assignments for the meal. Try to match volunteers to tasks

that are appropriate to their skills and capabilities.

Volunteers are precious resources but need to be managed in order for them to be most effective. Some volunteers do not possess the required flexibility and people skills to work in a soup kitchen environment. If volunteers behave in an incorrect or inappropriate manner, it should be brought to their attention. Although hopefully rare, every once in a while a volunteer may have to be asked to leave.

Be flexible and open minded in using volunteers; however, remember that volunteers are there to serve your organization, not the other way around.

Volunteer Recognition & Feedback

Before you start meal service, the floor manager or director should greet the patrons and make announcements which should include saying where the volunteers are from (be it a school, business, church, etc.), and thanking them for coming.

At the end of the meal ask your volunteers how it went, were there any surprises or anything different from what they expected. Ask for suggestions or improvements. When the volunteers are ready to leave, see them to the door while thanking them for their help. Hand out your brochures as they leave.

Volunteers need to be recognized for their contributions to the organization. A well-planned annual volunteer recognition event is a must.

Try to secure a prominent guest speaker, such as the mayor of your town or another well-known person.

Volunteer Tips

TIP # 1 – A good way to recruit and nurture volunteers is to feature volunteer profiles in your newsletter. This will highlight the important role they play in your organization.

TIP # 2 – As the soup kitchen and the number of volunteers grow, you should consider moving from an unpaid to a paid volunteer coordinator to properly recruit, oversee, evaluate and recognize your volunteers.

TIP # 3 – As the meal gets underway, monitor your volunteers to make sure they are comfortable in their assigned duties. For elderly volunteers, plan sit-down assignments such as wrapping plastic ware in paper napkins. Make sure no one is getting overly tired or overwhelmed. Provide rest periods for specific volunteers as required.

TIP # 4 – Volunteers should be considered as potential appointees to your Board of Trustees or as non-board members of committees such as fundraising, finance, etc.

TIP # 5 – The soup kitchen director should invite VIP volunteers into his/her office for a private briefing.

TIP # 6 – As stated in the previous chapter describing the attributes of the Volunteer Coordinator, it is important to schedule the required number of volunteers to serve the meal. Having too many volunteers can be as much of a problem as having too few.

Tales of TASK

The Picture Lady

TASK would not be the special place that it is without some very special volunteers. The driving force behind TASK's highly successful A-Team Artists of Trenton is "The Picture Lady". Many years ago she began taking photos of patrons with an old point-and-shoot camera. She would develop the photos and give them to the subject. Many of these patrons had never had photos taken of them and were thrilled to now possess something which many of us take for granted. Word quickly spread that there is a lady at TASK who would snap a photo of you for free, no questions asked. Soon the number of patrons seeking photos to keep or send to family members elsewhere became quite large. This original project has grown immensely and now includes many patron artists dealing in watercolor, acrylic and folk art. The A-Team Artist Cooperative has grown to over 30 artists who exhibit their works at many shows each year.



chapter **twelve**

Patron Relations

Chapter 12:

Patron Relations

The desire and motivation to start or expand a soup kitchen stems from one's compassion to help people whom we call the less fortunate. Most folks who frequent a soup kitchen just want to come in from the cold or heat, eat a meal, maybe socialize a little bit and then leave to go about their business. However, occasionally you will encounter someone with a personality and mental health disorder whose behavior or attitude is not what you expected. This is part of the climate of a soup kitchen. Try not to be put off by this; just know it will happen from time to time.

The fact is that the vast majority of soup kitchen patrons are very appreciative of your service. Many patrons say thank you and it is not uncommon to see people saying a prayer of grace before they begin to eat.

There are many challenges and rewards when serving meals to the less fortunate. This chapter will discuss some of the more common challenges that you will face in the general area of patron relations.

Creating a sense of community is key to running a good soup kitchen. You should try to create a friendly, homelike environment. For example, birthdays of patrons could be acknowledged with a song and cake. As discussed in the facilities chapter, the dining room should be welcoming and attractive. If possible, a nice touch is to have posters and/or artwork on the walls.

You should stress hospitality and service with a smile. Try to remember patron names and use them. Look people in the eye. The most important tool in your toolbox is a smile. Your volunteers and staff and patrons are observing your reactions.

Staff and volunteers should treat patrons with dignity and respect at all times. In general, 99% of your patrons will appreciate your efforts and service, and that rivals the best percentage in most restaurants.

You should tell volunteers and staff that they should be courteous and honor patron requests if at all possible, but at the same time, they should not tolerate abusive behavior by anyone. Volunteers should immediately alert someone in authority if they encounter any unacceptable behavior. You should also stress the importance of maintaining proper boundaries with soup kitchen patrons. Volunteers should not become overly friendly

or give patrons money, rides or gifts.

Don't be a push-over. What is required is a combination of empathy and following the rules. Be flexible when flexibility is called for but don't undermine your own rules (such as the rules you gave the volunteers to follow).

Set the bar high regarding patron behavior. Have clear, high standards. Spell out what constitutes bad behavior – cursing, threatening gestures, fighting, etc. Don't tolerate serious deviations from the standards.

Make it abundantly clear that there will be consequences for inappropriate behavior. There should be an incremental approach to addressing bad behavior. Sanctions should reflect the seriousness of the violation, such as you can't come inside and be part of the community of the soup kitchen for a week, or a month, or six months. In those cases, either a hot meal or bag meal may be served at the side door.

If kindness and then firmness don't stabilize the specific situation you are dealing with, you may need to look to law enforcement support. This subject will be addressed in the following chapter on Safety and Security.

Floor Manager

Your floor manager is key to setting the tone for the dining room whether he/she is a volunteer or a paid staff member. Assuming that you do not have sufficient volunteers to serve as waiters or waitresses for a sit-down meal, the floor manager's primary responsibilities will be to issue meal tickets, oversee the flow of patrons through the serving line, insure table turn-over if there are more patrons than seats, and operate a clicker that counts the number of patrons who are given meal tickets.

In addition to seating patrons in an orderly fashion, the floor manager is responsible for ensuring people leave once they have finished their meal (to allow for the serving of additional patrons and cleanup of the room).

The floor manager or director should make general announcements to the patron population each day. Make announcements before the meal – it helps to set the tone for the dining room. Include thanking the volunteers for the day - say where they are from, be it a business, a school, or a religious organization. You should also mention any upcoming activities, information or deadlines relevant to your patrons.

Specific Challenges

Patrons generally have multiple problems in their lives that can be brought into the soup kitchen. These problems include relationship, family, financial, possible drug and alcohol addiction, mental health and anger management issues. People often have been traumatized by violence and extreme dysfunction in their lives. Patrons may be struggling and are practicing survival skills to get through their day. It often takes courage to live their lives. In the world outside the soup kitchen, patrons are usually treated with hostility or are ignored. The soup kitchen represents a safe space where people can be treated with respect and dignity.

The following are common patron challenges you might face:

Suicidal patron – this is a medical emergency and you should contact 911 for transport of the person to the nearest crisis center.

Hostile patron, people jumping in line, very noisy behavior - there is such a thing as ignorable behavior; that being said, depending on the specific behavior, security support may be necessary (see Chapter 13 for a full discussion of safety and security).

Mentally ill and those with a dual diagnosis of mentally ill and chemically addicted (MICA) – response depends on the severity of the behavior, ranging from tender loving care (TLC) to requesting support from security.

Intoxicated patron – it is best to seat the person away from others and have a volunteer go through the serving line and deliver the meal to the person.

Sick patrons – again, it depends on the severity; kindness and assistance up to a call for medical support.

Disabled patron – be of assistance in seating and delivering the meal to their table.

Bad parenting behavior (such as hitting or yelling at their kids) – this is particularly difficult. Treating the family with extra care and attention often helps. If it is a serious situation, security support may again be needed.

Complaints about bad food – examine the food, get a new plate, alert the cook that a complaint has been lodged and that there may be a pan of bad food.

Misplaced meal tickets – provide a new ticket if you feel the person is sincere. Question in a polite manner if you suspect you are being taken advantage of by the patron.

Requests for seconds, for take-out, for food for their driver, their sick parent, child, spouse, friend, for alternative food items, for dessert only – you should decide ahead of time what your policies will be for these requests.

Requests for money – in general it's a bad idea to give people money.

Patron Relations Tips

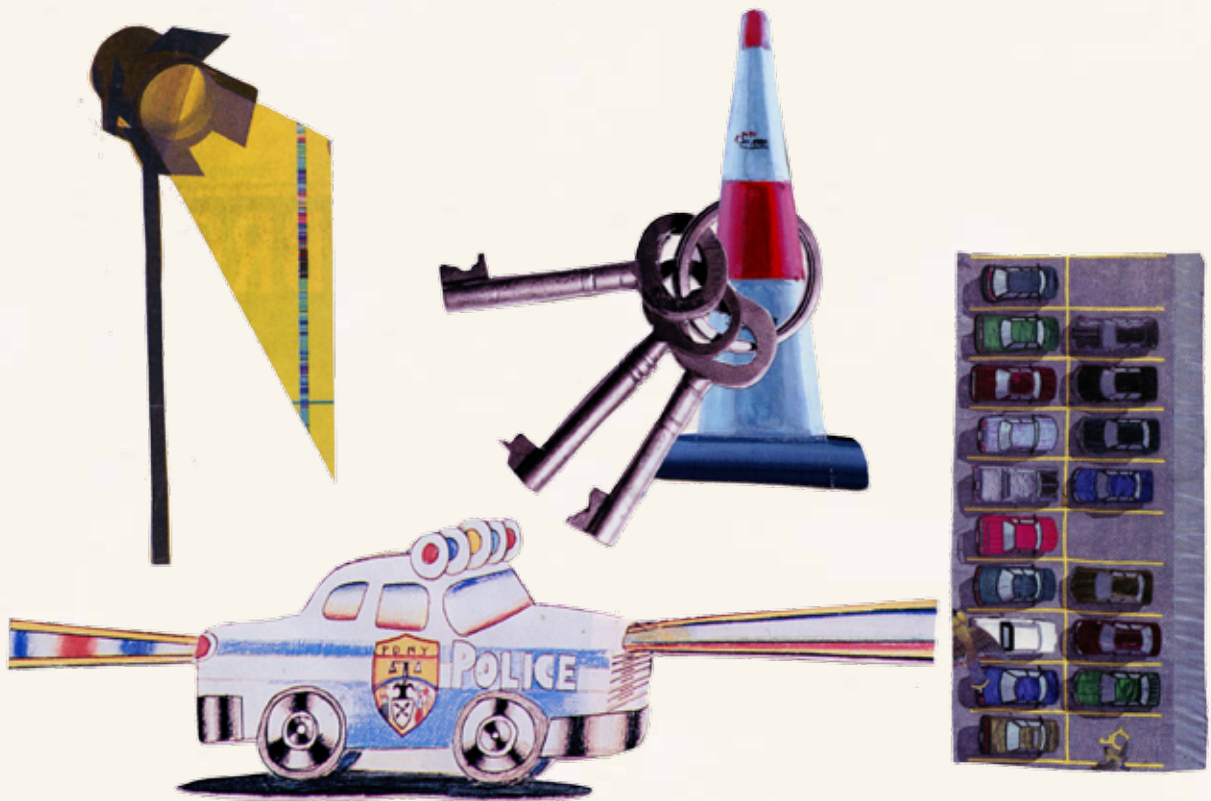
TIP # 1 – It is not unusual for some patrons to want to be volunteers at the soup kitchen. Allowing patrons to be volunteers has to be done carefully. You must be selective. It is not uncommon for patrons, who have been given even modest authority, to abuse it and start ordering people (other patrons, volunteers) around. While many patrons are sincere in their desire to help and are trying to give back, it is best to monitor the person until you are sure that they are helping for the right reasons.

TIP # 2 – Solicit patron feedback on the quality of the meal and the services provided. There are a variety of strategies that can be implemented to secure patron input, e.g., suggestion box, patrons serving on a patron advisory council or your board of trustees.

TIP # 3 – At some point you may consider appointing a patron to your board of trustees. If so, it is important to recognize that he or she may not be familiar with parliamentary procedures and other meeting protocol. If you are going to have patrons serve on the board you need to make a commitment to training, orientation and on-going mentoring. Just appointing them to the board and letting them sink or swim is generally unproductive and unfair.

TIP # 4 – You will sometimes get requests for immediate service because the person must get back to their job. A good way to handle these requests is to ask the person to provide proof of employment and then provide them with express service.





chapter thirteen

Safety & Security

Chapter 13: Safety & Security

Patrons want to feel safe and secure as much as anyone. For many patrons, the soup kitchen offers a respite from the chaotic and hectic nature of their everyday lives. They want a place that feels safe and non-threatening. Volunteers and staff also deserve to be working in a safe space.

Security Systems & Services

One of your first considerations regarding security will be whether your building has a security alarm system. If it does not and your budget permits, you should investigate subscribing to a building security and alarm service. These services provide detectors for all of your designated doors, for temperature monitoring of your coolers and freezers and can also provide motion detectors in any designated area. You need to make sure that the facility meets all fire codes and that required fire and smoke detector alarms and fire suppression sprinklers are in good working condition.

The next step up in security is contracting with professional security personnel or uniformed police. Many times local police are available on an off-duty basis for outside jobs. Enlisting either a security service or police can be a difficult decision as it can be costly and, if not executed properly, can change the feel of your dining room. You would not want to go to this level of security unless you have experienced serious negative incidents in the dining room or outside the building.

If you determine there is a need for on-site security you will want to make sure that the personnel you retain are highly trained and have a track record of working with people of diverse ethnic backgrounds in a sensitive, empathetic manner. You also want security personnel who have experience dealing with those who are mentally ill and/or those suffering from substance-abuse problems.

It should be noted that the mere presence of security personnel in uniform will generally reduce the number of negative incidents. Trained personnel have the ability to maintain a low profile and only surface in the instance of a potentially hostile situation. If done well,

security personnel will in time blend in and not negatively impact the hospitable tone of your meal service.

Volunteer Security

You need to provide for the safety of your staff and volunteer vehicles. Volunteers should be told to make sure their cars are locked and devoid of valuables. They should avoid parking at the soup kitchen and then be seen stowing valuables in the trunk of their vehicles. If you are serving an evening meal, it is important to have a well-lit parking lot. Also, consideration should be given to providing security staff to walk the parking lot during the meal. You should have a reimbursement policy to cover vandalized or damaged cars.

When volunteers arrive at the soup kitchen, it is good practice to provide a secure area to store personal items and clothing (see also Chapter 11 Volunteer Management).

During the orientation and briefing session, volunteers should be made aware of the risks of becoming overly friendly with patrons i.e., offering to provide rides, loaning money, or taking patrons out to dinner and/or entertainment events.

As stated in the volunteer management chapter, you should decide on a minimum age for your volunteers. The Trenton Area Soup Kitchen has a policy of no volunteers younger than thirteen.

One particular problem can arise with teenage volunteers who are dropped off by their parents and then need to be picked up at the end of the meal. If the parent is running late, you must provide an adult to stay with the young person until their ride arrives.

Building Security & Staff Safety

There are many common sense procedures to minimize risk at a soup kitchen. It is also true that, despite your best efforts, problems will arise. For instance, from time-to-time things may be stolen. While it is prudent to be insured for theft and liability, at some level stolen items should be considered a cost of doing business.

One kind of theft that is potentially serious is that of food provided by the USDA. It is important to have good inventory control of such food items. If there is theft or misappropriation suspected and a complaint is lodged,

you will be dealing with a government field food investigator. To minimize problems, some soup kitchens utilize security cameras to monitor their delivery doors.

Some simple steps to follow include closing and locking your office behind you and having a hierarchy of keys for staff, for example, separate inside vs. outside door locks, desk locks, storage area locks and cooler and freezer locks.

You should institute a check-off list for staff to follow when opening and closing the facility. Check list items should include locking doors, turning off lights, setting alarms, and checking freezers and coolers. It is important to check the bathrooms before you leave to make sure that no one has fallen asleep in the stalls. You don't want to get a phone call in the middle of the night from your security service telling you the motion detector has gone off. It is best to have more than one person on the premises when closing. In fact, you should never have one person alone at the facility at any time.

Control of foot traffic in the soup kitchen is an important security concern. You should have no unlocked doors that provide access to other parts of the building.

It is the floor manager's responsibility to monitor the dining room for any disturbance and respond as soon as noticed. Potential problems need to be nipped in the bud. If the floor manager does not address a situation until too late, it will be necessary for him/her to alert security personnel for assistance. When altercations occur

you should enter the pertinent information into an Incident Log Book. This is particularly useful if you find it necessary to document why you separated a patron from the general soup kitchen population for a specific period of time due to unacceptable behavior.

There are several further precautions to provide a safe and healthy environment for your staff. As your soup kitchen grows you should consider providing testing for staff for TB, HIV, and Hepatitis. While not mandatory, it is desirable to have someone on staff who has received first aid and/or CPR and Heimlich maneuver training. When dealing with cuts or bleeding it is important to wear sanitary gloves. For serious medical emergencies you should always call 911. As stated in the food safety chapter, all staff should be in the habit of frequent hand-washing. Providing wall-mounted hand sanitizer stations for patrons, volunteers and staff is also desirable.

Safety & Security Tips

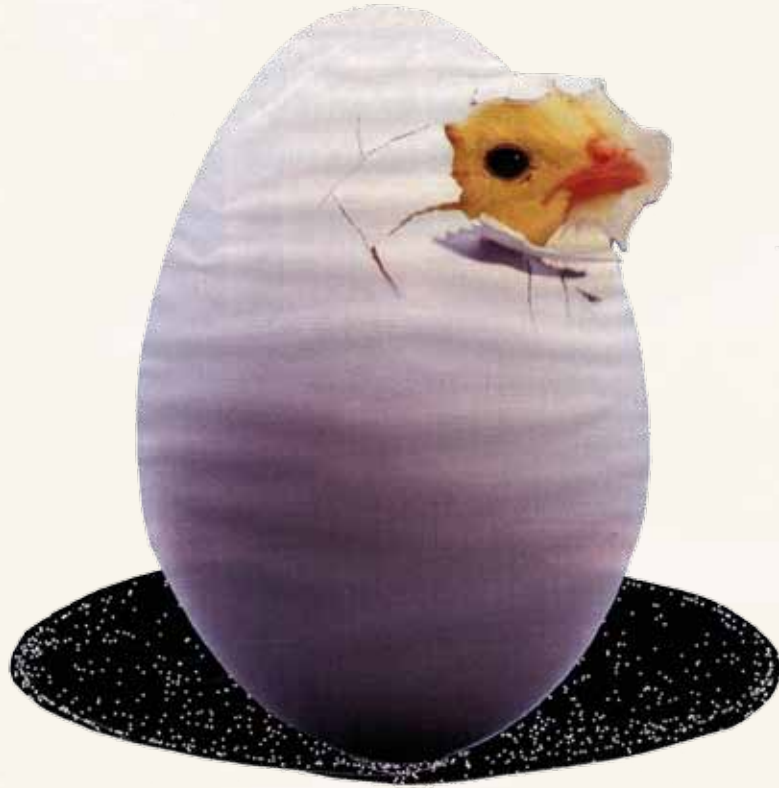
TIP # 1 – Another option for minimizing car theft or vandalism is to have closed circuit cameras positioned outside the building.

TIP # 2 – If you utilize motion detectors as part of your security system, be aware that the detectors can be set off by heating and air conditioning fans blowing anything that might be hanging from the ceiling such as

Tales of TASK

Off-Duty Police Officers

TASK worked hard to create a welcoming and hospitable environment over the years. However, as the demand for its services increased dramatically in the late 1990's and the dining room became more and more crowded, periodic incidents occurred (dining room altercations and car break-ins). Clearly, this was a situation that had to be addressed to ensure a safe environment for patrons, volunteers and staff. However, the board was concerned that hiring uniformed security personnel would change the homelike feeling of the dining room. After much soul-searching, the board decided to hire part-time off-duty police to monitor the dining room and parking lot during meal service. The result has been an almost total elimination of incidents without impacting the hospitable feeling of the dining room. Patrons overwhelmingly appreciate the safety and security provided by the police.



chapter fourteen

Expanding the Mission

Chapter 14: Expanding the Mission

As your soup kitchen grows you may find that you want to expand your services. If so, a threshold question you will need to grapple with is whether to provide new programs yourself or partner with another nonprofit. Regardless, you certainly want to avoid any duplication of service with other area nonprofits. You should also be cautious not to fall prey to mission drift, i.e., implementing new programs beyond your mission.

When considering new programs, you need to think carefully about long-term funding. Many funding sources will support a new initiative for a year or two but not beyond. You need to consider whether your organization can raise the required money when initial funding sources ends. Nothing is worse than starting a great program and then having it end abruptly because of a loss of funding. It is painful to patrons and to staff.

Even if a new program is going to be largely staffed by volunteers, for example a volunteer based-tutoring program, you must plan on-going recruiting, training, supervising, evaluating and recognizing your volunteers. Volunteer retention, like donor retention, requires on-going effort and, even then, you will lose volunteers.

Patrons come to the soup kitchen because they are hungry. By adding new programs you have the opportunity to introduce them to other services.

There are at least five categories of program expansion to consider: (1) meal service, (2) support services, (3) self-sufficiency programs, (4) quality of life programs, and (5) advocacy/outreach:

Expanding the Meal Service Program

If you decide to expand your meal service program, there are many different options to consider:

1. If you are currently serving lunch, you might decide to serve breakfast and/or dinner.
2. In addition to your hot meal service, you might consider providing a take-home bag of non-per-

ishable food for later consumption. Similarly, you might provide next day breakfast bags for all the children who come to your soup kitchen.

3. You might open up satellite sites in other parts of your town or region. You should be careful to ensure you have the same level of food safety and sanitation as in place at your main facility. There is also the need to provide strong management at satellite operations. This is an example of where a local partnership should be considered.
4. You could open up a food pantry or operate a mobile unit to take meals out into the community.
5. Still another option is to institute a backpack program which provides weekend meals to children.

Support Services

There are several different methods of providing social services to your patrons. One is to hire a social worker. Another is to have an outside service provider at your facility. Still another is to subcontract a social worker from another agency. The advantage of subcontracting is that the soup kitchen is relieved of main management and oversight, the contracts are time specific, and they can be ended if funding problems arise. The following are examples of potential social support services:

1. Social service counseling; information and referral programs; access to Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Medicare/Medicaid
2. Medical screenings (blood pressure and blood work); dental screenings
3. Distribution of eye glasses purchased at pharmacies
4. Local health center mobile van providing service immediately outside your facility (lessens impact to dining room)
5. Drug and alcohol addiction programs; assistance with mental health issues
6. Assistance with food stamp and unemployment benefit applications, Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC), immigration status issues, housing, legal services, income tax preparation and notary service

Self-Sufficiency Programs

The ancient Chinese proverb says, “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” This is the rationale for offering programs that provide educational and job-training opportunities:

1. Adult basic education (ABE) programs are particularly needed by soup kitchen patrons who may have not completed high school and may be deficient in literacy and math skills.
2. General Equivalency Diploma (GED) programs and computer literacy and training are very important. Try to recruit volunteer tutors for your ABE, GED and computer courses. It is not necessary for a tutor to have been a teacher, but some degree of tutor training is important.
3. Culinary arts programs train students to become cooks and chefs for the food industry. This kind of program can be conducted in the evening, thereby extending the use your facility. The program can involve networking with area restaurants for trainers and job placement. Your local community college can also be a valuable resource.
4. Help with resume preparation and job search assistance.

Quality of Life Programs

Running a soup kitchen is as much about building a sense of community as it is serving food. One of your overall goals should be to help patrons improve their self-esteem and self-confidence. One way to promote a community feel is to provide programs to improve the quality of life of your patrons. The following are examples of such programs that you might offer:

1. Arts programs (painting, photography, poetry, writing, drama, music)
2. Distribution of hygiene kits (bar of soap, disposable razor, deodorant, toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo)
3. Providing haircuts and other personal hygiene services

4. Offering magazines and books (hard backs look good on display, but paperbacks are easier for patrons to carry)
5. Accepting mail for homeless patrons; allowing local outgoing telephone calls; taking patrons' phone messages
6. Offering e-mail access if you have a computer room
7. Offering donated clothing (tube socks, knit caps, gloves, scarves, sweatshirts), backpacks and tote bags
8. Daily announcements on activities at other agencies such as food and clothing distributions, special events, and deadlines for provision of specific services
9. Hosting holiday parties such as Christmas and Halloween; Easter egg hunts; birthday parties for adults and children. All these are ways to boost morale for patrons who may have little else to celebrate in their lives. You should try to solicit donations of toys and new clothing from the wider public.
10. Recreation and healthy life-style programs such as sports (basketball, tennis) and stress-reduction techniques (yoga, stretching, and meditation).

Outreach & Advocacy

While it is necessary for you to reach out to the wider community to raise funds for your meal program, you may also decide to broaden your mission to include advocacy and public education about the root causes of hunger and poverty. This could take the form of hosting periodic forums/lectures on hunger issues and making presentations before community groups, civic organizations, senior citizen groups, book clubs, religious congregations, youth groups, elementary and high schools and local college classes and assemblies.

Specific advocacy issues beyond hunger include affordable housing, government programs affecting your patrons, drug and alcohol addiction, criminal justice and ex-offender programs, immigration, education/job training, minimum vs. living wage and the like. You might also consider conducting non-partisan voter registration drives at your facility.

Clearly you do not want to get involved in partisan politics. Avoid having candidates for public office participate in your events during election campaigns. It

is also important to avoid anything that could be considered lobbying. You don't want to threaten your nonprofit status.

Advocacy for anti-poverty programs might include testifying at government hearings. You will find that you have credibility because of your food service mission. It is helpful to legislators and the media if you provide handouts of your material. A particularly effective handout is your meal count chart.

When you launch a new program or expand your mission you should publicize the news as widely as you can, whether by press releases, local TV and radio spots, or public speaking opportunities. More and more, the electronic venue is the medium of choice for telling the community about programs and services. Publicizing new programs can help in general fundraising as such efforts make your basic mission more known by the wider community.

In expanding your services, you may encounter donor concerns that you are not adhering to your basic food service mission. Our experience at TASK has been that, by and large, the public approves of expanded services. They appreciate that you are trying to do something to reduce poverty in addition to providing free food.

As your soup kitchen matures, the work of the program committee becomes more important. In concert with the director, the role of this committee is to solicit patron input and develop proposals for new programs

consistent with the agency's mission statement. New programs must be reviewed in light of available resources and presented to the full board for final approval.

TIPS for Expanding the Mission

TIP # 1 – When offered goods such as food or clothing, don't be reluctant to say no if you feel these donations do not meet safety and cleanliness standards. You should urge donors to provide only clean clothing.

TIP # 2 – Ask volunteer groups to bring in-kind donations of travel or hotel size hygiene items. Local businesses, schools and religious organizations are also sources of donations, whether they are food, clothing, or hygiene articles.

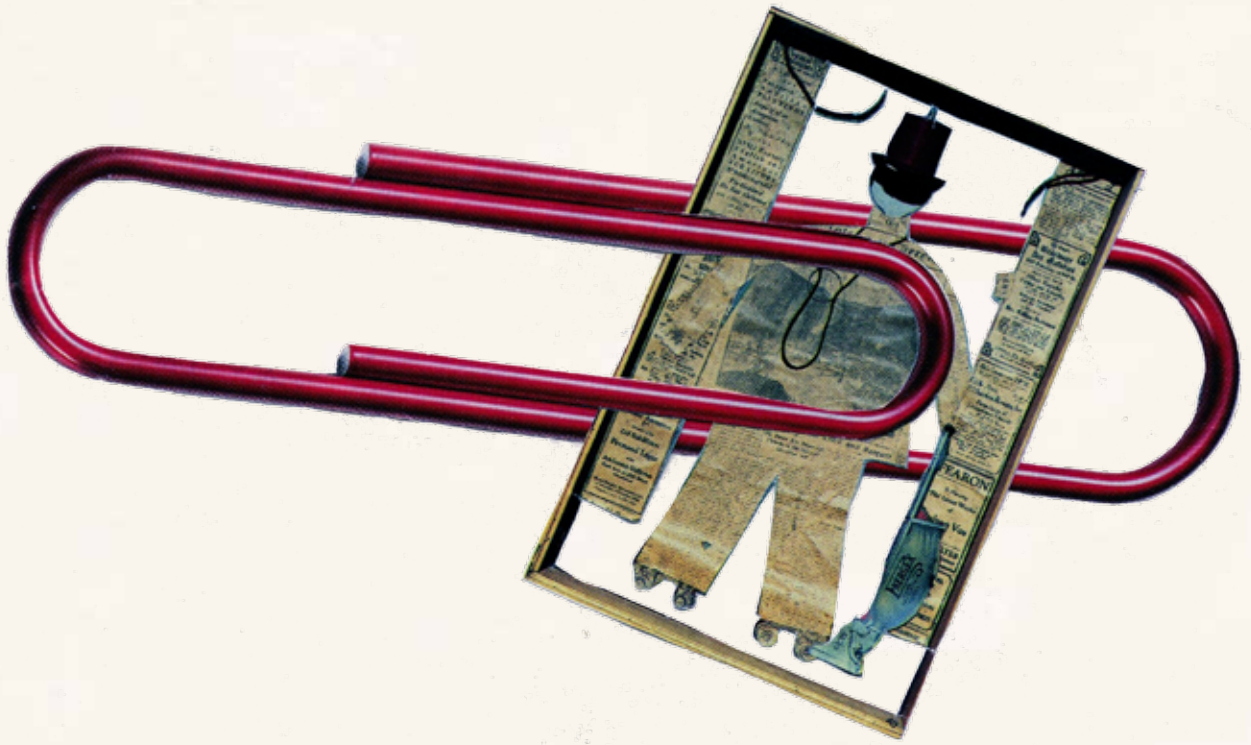
TIP # 3 – The quality of life at your soup kitchen can be improved noticeably by displaying artwork on the dining room walls, having pleasant music over a PA system and ensuring a welcoming attitude by all staff and volunteers.

TIP # 4 – If you provide patrons with internet service, you will need to decide whether to block access to objectionable sites.

notes:



epilogue



appendices

Appendix A: Obtaining Nonprofit Status

Becoming a nonprofit or a 501(c) (3) means the entity, usually a corporation, is organized for nonpolitical purposes and has been recognized by the IRS as being tax-exempt by virtue of its charitable programs.

The initial corporate meeting is the essential first step in forming a nonprofit organization. It is at this meeting that the initial board of directors is installed and officer titles determined. The minutes of this meeting should include a resolution that shows unanimous affirmation by the board to establish the organization and pursue both incorporation and federal tax exemption. The purpose of the organization should be articulated in writing. At this point you will also need to decide on a name for the corporation.

Filing & Approval

To obtain federal tax code recognition as a 501(c) (3), tax-exempt entity, Form 1023 must be filed with the Internal Revenue Service. Form 1023 is a 29-page,

comprehensive look at an organization's structure and programs. Given the number of additional schedules, attachments and exhibits that may be required in addition to the application itself, most Form 1023 filings range between 50-100 pages of information.

Typically, IRS 501(c) (3) approval takes between two and 12 months, including the time needed to answer written follow-up questions. Expedited review can be requested if a new organization is being formed to provide immediate disaster relief or if a promised grant is both 1) substantial relative to the organization's budget and 2) the grant has a specifically defined expiration date. However, there is no guarantee the IRS will grant expedited review requests.

You will also need to register in your state as a nonprofit organization by contacting the Charity Registration Office. In addition, most states also have requirements that nonprofits submit an annual report along with a filing fee. The vast majority of states also require charities that raise funds by soliciting individuals, corporations, foundations and state government to register annually. Failure to file these reports can result in revocation of one's corporate status.



Appendix B: Nonprofit Bylaws & Committee Structure

Bylaws are developed during the incorporation phase of your entity's formation. Bylaws are the rules that govern the internal management of the organization. They are written by the organization's founders and cover, at minimum, topics such as how directors are elected, how meetings of directors are conducted, what officers the organization will have and their duties, the role of the executive committee, the committees of the board, how amendments are made to the bylaws, and the process of dissolving the corporation. Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation are the primary official documents of the corpo-

ration. The particular requirements for bylaws are set by the state in which the charity is incorporated.

Typical committees of the board might include the following:

- Audit and Investment
- Building and Grounds
- Budget
- Capital and Endowment
- Finance
- Fundraising
- Kitchen and Equipment
- Patron Relations
- Personnel
- Programs
- Security



Appendix C: Typical Soup Kitchen Vendors

The following is a list of typical vendors (products and services) that soup kitchens utilize. Depending on your soup kitchen's staff, some of these services (such as accounting, handyman, janitorial, and lawn care) could be performed by employees:

- Accountant
- Auditor (CPA)
- Computer equipment services
- Copy machines
- Electrician
- Employee assistance provider
- Food bank
- Food purveyors (dairy, meat, eggs, fish, staples, fruits and vegetables)
- Handyman (maintenance services)

- Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) contractors
- Insurance broker
- Janitorial, floor cleaning and waxing services
- Kitchen filters, floor mats and floor drain cleaning services
- Kitchen suppliers
- Lawn care services
- Legal services
- Office equipment suppliers
- Painters
- Payroll Service
- Pest control
- Plumber
- Security system
- Snow removal
- Trash removal
- Window cleaning services



Appendix D: Grant Making & Providers of Information:

1. Altria Corporate Giving Program*
6601 West Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23232
Tel: (617) 663-4000; Fax: (617) 663-5396
<http://www.accessphilanthropy.com>
2. Community Food Security Coalition
3830 S.E. Division Street
Portland, Oregon 97202
Tel: (503) 954-2970; Fax: (503) 954-2959
<http://www.foodsecurity.org>
3. Feeding America
35 Wacker Drive
Suite 2000
Chicago, Ill 60601
Tel: (800) 771-2303; Fax: (312) 263-5626
<http://feedingamerica.org>
4. Food Research and Action Center
1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW Suite 540,
Washington, DC 20009
Tel: (202) 986-2200; Fax: (202) 986-2525
www.frac.org
5. MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
10495 Santa Monica Blvd.
Suite 100, Los Angeles, CA 90025
Tel: (800) 813-0557; Fax: (310) 442-0030
www.mazon.org
6. Share Our Strength
1730 M Street NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20036
Tel: (800) 869-4767; Fax: (202) 347-5868
<http://www.strength.org>
7. United States Department of Agriculture
USDA Food and Nutrition Service
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, Virginia 22302
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsec/>
8. United Way of America
701 North Fairfax Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
Tel: (703) 836-7112
www.liveunited.org
9. WHY (World Hunger Year)
505 Eight Avenue, Suite 2100
New York, New York 10018
Tel (800) 5-HUNGRY
www.worldhungeryear.org

*Altria Group is the parent company for Philip Morris USA, one of the largest tobacco and liquor manufacturers in the world. Many nonprofits question the ethics of accepting money from tobacco and liquor manufacturers. Requests to the company should be preceded by a board discussion regarding the acceptance of such funding.



Appendix E: Further Reading on Hunger in America

Joel Berg, *All You Can Eat, How Hungry is America?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2008)

Larry J. Brown & H. R. Pfizer, *Living Hungry in America* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987)

Robert Egger, *Begging for Change - The Dollars and Sense of Making Nonprofits Responsive, Efficient, and Rewarding for All* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2004)

Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2001)

Peter K. Eisinger, *Toward an End to Hunger in America*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute Press, 1998)

Michael Harrington, *The Other America: Poverty in the United States* (New York: Touchstone, 1997)

Nick Kotz, *Let Them Eat Promises: The Politics of Hunger in America* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1968)

George McGovern, *The Third Freedom: Ending Hunger in Our Time* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2002)

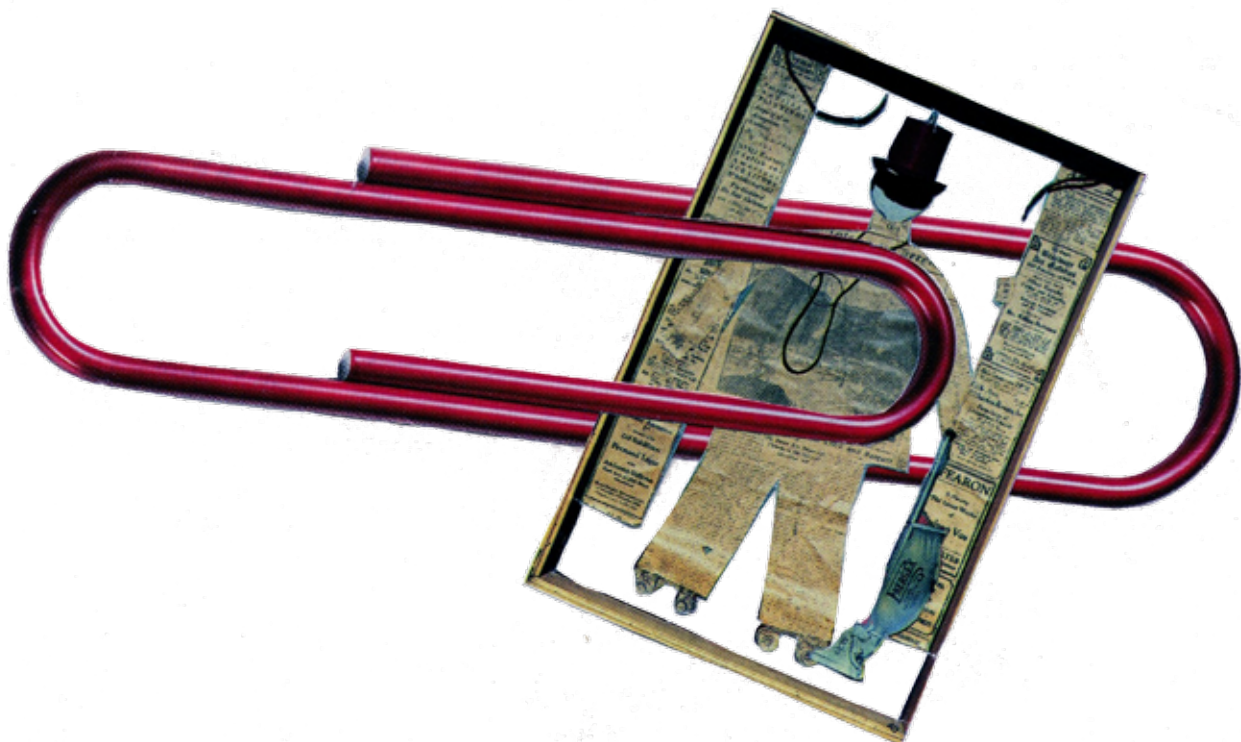
Janet Poppendieck, *Sweet Charity?: Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement* (New York: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1998)

Loretta Schwartz-Nobel, *Growing Up Empty: The Hunger Epidemic in America* (New York: HarperCollins, 2002)

Lee Seglem, *IN PLAIN SIGHT: Battling Hunger, Building Lives - The Story of TASK* (Lincoln, Nebraska: iUniverse, 2008)

David K. Shipler, *The Working Poor* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004)

Mark Winne, *Closing the Food Gap*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2008)



Appendix F: Services to Spur the Development of New Soup Kitchens

Visits to the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen:

If you would like to learn more about the operation of the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen you can arrange a site visit and/or seminar at TASK by contacting Dennis Micai, the soup kitchen's Director, at (609) – 695-5456 ext. 101 or dennism@trentonsoupkitchen.org. For further information on TASK's services and programs go to www.trentonsoupkitchen.org.

At this time you will meet the wonderful staff of TASK and see first-hand the magic of this special place. There is no fee for the site visit/lecture.

Consulting at your location:

Authors Irwin Stoolmacher and Peter Wise are available for in-the-field consulting with groups seeking additional in depth information or input regarding starting a new or sustaining an existing soup kitchen. Irwin Stoolmacher can be reached at Stoolgroup@aol.com and Peter Wise at petekathy@aol.com.

Fees are based on amount of time required at site to respond to the specific need. In addition, air or rail transportation will be billed based on actual cost and meals at the current federal per diem rate.

The above authors are also available for presentations on the book's content before groups, organizations and at conventions.

Workshop: Should You Start a Soup Kitchen?

Summary: This three-hour workshop is designed to ascertain whether it is realistic for your group to start a

soup kitchen in your community. The workshop can be conducted at the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK), at a community site or at a regional or national gathering.

It begins with the crucial questions of whether there is a need in your community for a soup kitchen or whether, perhaps, some other approach to address the needs of the hungry is more appropriate.

The workshop will systematically reviews the ten key requirements for opening and operating a soup kitchen and evaluates your capacity and readiness for undertaking this challenging undertaking.

Instructors: The seminar is led by Irwin Stoolmacher and Peter Wise who have more than 30 year of experience working with the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK). They are co-authors, with Martin Tuchman, of *Mission Possible: How You Can Start and Operate a Soup Kitchen*, which is a product of that experience.

Workshop Content: The workshop will provide practical and crucial information of the following topics (2.5 hours):

- Introduction: defining the need & scope of mission
- Should you incorporate as a nonprofit?
- Your location and your facility
- Start-up public relations and marketing
- Acquiring food & food safety requirements
- Financial management
- Raising funds
- Volunteer recruitment
- Patron relations
- Safety & security

Optional Tour of the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen: You will be guided on a behind-the-scenes tour of the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen (TASK) by the soup kitchen's staff.

Wrap-up question and answer session: You will be provided with a comprehensive checklist to help you

determine whether the need exists and whether you have the assets, resources and organizational capability to establish and operate a soup kitchen in your community (.5 hours).

Workshop Cost: The U.S. cost of the workshop is \$1,500 plus direct expenses (travel, lodging, and meals at the current federal per diem rate). The cost for the workshop outside the continental United States is \$2,500. This price includes all hand-out materials in English.