



SUMMER 2019

NEWSLETTER

Lifting People Up With a Hot Meal



Hi, my name is Cece.

Currently I work nearly full time at a large national grocery store where I manage the bakery and deli departments and have for the past two years. I pay

rent to live on a boat in the Boat Yard. My life is much more stable than previously when I became homeless and was always hungry.

A few years ago after I broke up with my boyfriend, I could no longer afford rent by myself. For a while I lived with family, but then became homeless. I found work as a caregiver for an elderly woman. When that assignment ended, I was blessed that my client gave me her van to live in.

While I was homeless, I did odd jobs to earn money for gas and food, but being homeless, it was difficult to save money. To earn money I did many jobs such as mowing lawns, lawn care, stripping and painting decks, other light home improvement projects, and working for caterers. I have never used drugs or alcohol, but it was very hard to get out of this cycle of homelessness. I had to buy gas and cold food. It felt like I was always buying ice to keep food cold to avoid spoilage. Many times, I only ate canned tuna or other canned goods. Sometimes if I wanted a hot meal, I would buy ramen at a convenience store and heat it in the microwave there. I could not cook, and rarely got a hot meal. The list to get into a shelter was very long, so I continued to live out of my van while trying to save money for an apartment.

In 2015, I noticed that several people I knew were all going somewhere, and one of them asked me to go with them to get a hot meal and a free bag of groceries at the Oakley Loaves and Fishes Dining Room. I had not heard of Loaves and Fishes before. I went and met the manager Debbie. Debbie is so good to the Oakley Loaves and Fishes' clients. She is a resource to them and tries to help them; she also encouraged me when I was down. I'm a Christian, and try to stay focused on the right path, but sometimes I would get down. I worked in retail, then I got my current position at the grocery store. I work 80-100% time and am always willing to take on extra shifts to earn more money. I felt like God led me to the Boat Yard where I found a boat to rent and live on while I continue to save my earnings.

Having the hot full meal at Loaves and Fishes was truly fantastic, after eating only cold canned food. I felt thankful that the Loaves and Fishes meal was healthy and included fresh fruits and vegetables. Being homeless, it was nice to just be able to sit down in a calm and warm environment and have a full hot meal.

Now that I'm working almost full time, I sometimes will use the Loaves and Fishes free food pantry for bread or peanut butter. Having access to the free food pantry really helps to stretch my earnings.

I want people who read my story to know that there are good people like the Loaves and Fishes organization, and Debbie, the Oakley manager to help you when you need it. Many people think that all homeless people are bad, but some, like me, face circumstances that result in homelessness. Loaves and Fishes and Debbie the manager were a big part of how I got out of a bad cycle. I'm incredibly grateful.



Loaves and Fishes
OF CONTRA COSTA
Nourishing Lives

The Culinary Arts Program



Mason's Story

Mason, 22 years old, just graduated from Loaves and Fishes' Culinary Arts Training Program in June 2019. He came to Loaves and Fishes with the goal of advancing from his current position as a dishwasher and fry-cook at Applebee's Restaurant. He heard about the program through Dawn, the program assistant, and wanted to learn more culinary techniques to improve his job opportunities.

Mason started cooking with his mom when he was 10 years old. It was then that he developed a passion for cooking and knew that's what he wanted to do as he grew up. After high school, Mason worked at Taco Bell and then landed at Applebee's.

Mason joined the Loaves and Fishes' Culinary Arts Training Program already knowing how to cook. What he learned during the class he says has provided him with skills that he wouldn't have learned at his current job, such as: proper cutting techniques, food presentation and his favorite – sous vide cooking. (Sous vide cooking is the process of sealing food in an airtight container—usually a vacuum sealed bag—and then cooking that food in temperature-controlled water.) Sous vide perfectly cooks protein. There's no guessing.

Mason enjoyed learning how to cook sous vide so much that he purchased one for himself to use at home! He made Tri-tip with it recently and said it was the best meal he's made for himself.

Although Mason can't change the menu at Applebee's, he has used what he's learned to be more precise in his vegetable cutting for the salads and has improved the presentation of meals he puts out through proper plating techniques.

The week before Mason graduated from the culinary program, he interviewed for a food operator position with Guckenheimer Food Service. The position is a full-time corporate cook with benefits, including 401k and scholarships for additional education.

Mason enjoyed the culinary program so much he's considering coming back for another session to learn more with Chef Ted. "I truly enjoyed every class and learning from Chef Ted. The other students and I had so much fun together," said Mason. He added, "If you enjoy cooking, and you want to learn more, this is a great place to start. I appreciate all the donors that have helped make this class possible. I wouldn't be here without them."



Graduating Classes

This calendar year we've completed two, 10-week Culinary Arts Training Programs. To date, of the 31 students enrolled, we've placed 18 students in a culinary job or helped improve their current living situation. Two students from the last graduating class in May are still interviewing for culinary jobs. The third class this year begins on June 18, 2019.

Please check out the Culinary tab on our website at: www.loavesfishescc.org for an application or more information.



ANNUAL EVENT ROCK OUT HUNGER A ROCKIN' SUCCESS!

Our annual event, ROCK OUT HUNGER, took place on May 11, 2019 at Blackhawk Country Club. We had nearly 150 people participate in the evening to help provide much-needed funds to support our five dining rooms in Contra Costa County.

We raised more than \$77,000 (net, an increase of 9% from last year). Thank you to the event committee, board members, auction chair, Lisa Allan, NCL volunteers and all our auction donors and supporters.

A special thank you to our corporate sponsors who underwrote the event so that the funds raised that evening could go directly to our program costs.

Sponsors include: Appwrap, BAC Bank, Blackhawk Living, Carrie and Michael Wilson, Castle Management, Colliers International, Danville Living, Deutscher Properties Corp, Ernst & Young LLP, John Muir Health, Kaiser Permanente, Karen Introcaso, KKDV, Legacy Risk & Insurance Services LLC, Phyllis and Reid Edwards, Rick Ross Construction, Stacii and David Gerson, Stephanie and Jay Snyder/Dell EMC, Walnut Creek Luxury Cars, WC Magazine, Wells Fargo, C&M Party Props.



If you weren't able to attend **ROCK OUT HUNGER**, you missed the moving speech by Christina Loyola-Cabral who is our Antioch dining room manager.



Christina spoke many years ago at the annual event and had more to share with us so she came back to tell us how she's overcome many challenges in her life and how Loaves and Fishes has helped her over the last several years. Here's an excerpt from her speech:

At 54 years old I had my first job interview EVER with Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa for the Antioch assistant dining room manager position. I was hired as a substitute dining room assistant for Loaves and Fishes and trained at the Bay Point and Antioch Dining Rooms. I continued to work hard and after 5 months as a dining room assistant, I was promoted to dining room manager at the Antioch site.

Through my work with Loaves, and Fishes I see firsthand everyday how Loaves and Fishes helps our clients. I instruct my volunteers to treat clients like family. Our clients have been kicked around by life, yelled at and ignored. I try to always show them charity and love. I try to ensure our clients are treated with dignity and respect.

I want you to know how much your support of Loaves and Fishes has helped not only me, but to the hundreds of clients we serve every day.

I hope you will continue to support Loaves and Fishes, as I've seen firsthand how much good we are able to do in the communities where we serve.



Director's Letter

Happy Summer, this is my favorite time of year. Kids are out of school, BBQs with friends and vacation! The past several months I have attended many discussions/focus groups on homelessness and providing affordable housing to people living in Contra Costa. Someone recently asked me, "What is the most important, food services or housing assistance?" It's an interesting question, and I found myself pondering on it for quite some time thinking about the day to day interactions within our Loaves and Fishes dining rooms. My conclusion is they are both equally important, but for a person's wellbeing they need food. Everyone needs food in order to be able to complete their daily activities, whether it is looking for housing, employment, taking care of their family or working. I believe Loaves and Fishes provides the "HEART" of basic needs and that is a healthy meal.

Loaves and Fishes' first priority is to deliver hot nutritious meals in a warm and friendly environment to anyone who is in need. It takes a tremendous amount of teamwork to deliver a hot meal to 5 locations throughout Contra Costa and two partner sites, Opportunity Junction and Trinity Center. When you look at the kitchen staff, who is truly behind the scenes, our operations become even more impressive. Serving 11,000 meals per month is no easy task.

Loaves and Fishes clients tell us that the two most important factors they consider when coming to our dining rooms are that they know we are always open and we have a good meal waiting for them. Since our inception, Loaves and Fishes believes that we offer a valuable service to the community. We are a stable and reliable resource for food. The summer months can be historically slow for donations, unfortunately hunger does not go on vacation! The number of meals served will increase due to more people being out and about because of the nice weather and kids not receiving a meal during school hours. Please help Loaves and Fishes "ROCK OUT HUNGER" this summer and support our efforts.



Joleen Lafayette, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A handwritten signature of Joleen Lafayette in black ink.

COMMUNITY GARDEN

COME SEE IT GROW!

If you haven't seen our community garden located out front of our Martinez dining room at 835 Ferry Street, please stop by! The community garden is sponsored by Shell Martinez Refinery. Twice a year volunteers from Shell spend time cleaning up, nurturing the soil and planting in the garden for everyone to enjoy. Currently there's tomatoes, kale, squash



and beautiful flowers growing. Barbara, our assistant dining room manager, cares for and waters the garden daily. Without Barbara's love and natural green thumb, the garden wouldn't be thriving as it does. Thank you, Shell and Barbara, for making the Loaves and Fishes community garden a highlight of the street.





Loaves and Fishes

OF CONTRA COSTA

Nourishing Lives

835 Ferry Street, Martinez, CA 94553
Tax ID# 68-0018077

Make a Difference!
DONATE

Write a check or donate online at
www.loavesfishescc.org

We also accept food donations

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LOAVES AND FISHES OPERATED DINING ROOMS/ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

ANTIOCH

American Legion Hall
403 W. 6th Street

BAY POINT

Community Baptist Church
62 Bella Vista Avenue

MARTINEZ

Dining Room/Admin Offices
835 Ferry Street

OAKLEY

Red Man-Pocahontas Hall
1403 Main Street

PITTSBURG

Loaves and Fishes/
St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room
1415 Simpson Court



VOLUNTEER CORNER

Emily is our new social media marketing intern. She is an incoming Senior at the University of Washington and majoring in Medical Anthropology and Global Health.

In her free time, Emily loves practicing yoga, going to the movies, and volunteering with her sorority.

Emily previously volunteered at the Loaves and Fishes dining rooms in the summer with her mother through National Charity League.

She is helping Loaves and Fishes grow their social media presence, so that more people can be made aware of our mission.

Do you have a social media account, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter? If so, it would be a big help if you want to follow us, tag us, share Loaves posts with your friends and family! We have the most current information on Loaves and Fishes events, meals, and other new information on our social media, please check out the Loaves accounts!



FOLLOW OUR SOCIALS TO KEEP UP WITH US!

Facebook: @loavesandfishescc
Instagram: @ccloavesandfishes
Twitter: @CCLoavesFishes

JOIN US AT OUR UPCOMING FUNDRAISERS

The Big La Bocce 2019

Bocce Ball Tournament

Benefiting Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa and St. Vincent de Paul of Contra Costa County
Saturday, September 7th, 10:30am Registration
Martinez Bocce Courts

Sign Up:

<https://loavesfishescc.ejoinme.org/BOCCE>

DRIVE OUT HUNGER

Charity Golf Tournament

Benefiting Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa
Monday, October 7th, 11:30am Shotgun Start
Round Hill Country Club

Sign Up: <https://loavesfishescc.ejoinme.org/DRIVEOUTHUNGER2019>

If you're interested in helping Mondays through Fridays, 9:30am to 1:15pm, please drop us a line at:

info@loavesfishescc.org