January 2020 News & Updates

Reflections from the Director

"We must be ready to allow ourselves to be interrupted by God. God will be constantly crossing our paths and canceling our plans by sending us people with claims and petitions." - Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together

New Year's resolutions. A couple of years ago I challenged myself with this one: to be ready at any time to ditch my plans. I'm a big one for keeping a calendar of appointments and making a daily to-do list. My control over my schedule gives me a feeling of security. But in reality, most things are out of my control. The world is not paradise, but a broken place, a place where human beings do things that are wrong and harmful, where even the natural world erupts causing sickness and disaster. When I can let go of my agenda, I open myself up to God's agenda, the needs of others, their "claims and petitions" on me.

Jesus said about certain people who heard his message and saw what he did, that they fulfilled this prophecy of Isaiah:

"You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them."(Matthew 13:14,15)

When I grasp my schedule tightly, am I really able to see people around me, like the homeless man living in his car? When I hold onto my plans rigidly, am I really able to hear people around me, like the mother pleading for food for her family? Bread of Life
challenges us every day to really see people, to really hear people, to let God "cross our path" and stop us in our tracks. True seeing and hearing lead to compassion, outrage at injustice, action and change. People who volunteer at BOL are those who see, hear and act. They are models for me. They are those who take time out on Christmas Day to deliver a meal to an elderly person who's alone; who come straight from work to help prepare and serve a meal for up to 75 people who need food and fellowship; who organize food drives in their workplace; who buy gloves, socks and blankets for homeless people. They show up and add their voices to movements that call for a living wage, affordable housing, inclusionary zoning, an end to for-profit rent hikes and evictions, justice for all.

As we begin 2020, I reflect on how much BOL accomplished this past year through the passion and compassion of over 500 volunteers. We provided 1 million meals to over 8,000 people through our pantries, evening meals, senior grocery delivery and homeless family and teen outreach. We provided clothing, baby supplies, flu shots, oral care education and services, referrals to housing and healthcare resources. Thank you for being part of this community of those who hear, see and act.

May God bless you & yours in this new year,
Gabriella Snyder Stelmack
Executive Director

P.S. Our "Under One Roof" campaign continues to gather momentum. Please like us and follow us on facebook and follow us on twitter. If you know of a house of worship, organization, business, individual, radio or TV show where we can talk about our campaign, please let us know by contacting Patty Kelly, Development Director: Patty.Kelly@breadoflifemalden.org, 781-820-4749.

Click here for information on our "Under One Roof" Campaign.
Click here to get involved in Bread of Life's work.

Christmas Dinner

The Christmas spirit was alive and well at our annual Christmas Day free community dinner! About 1,000 roast beef meals served, including 654 delivered to senior citizens! It was an incredibly smooth efficient operation thanks to super organizers, Dr. Ed and Dr. Jon Weiner and Project Ezra volunteers from Temple Tiferet Shalom of the North Shore. They also raised nearly $5,000 for BOL! Shout out to Bryna Misiura, delivery coordinator, Encore Boston Harbor and GMAACC cleanup volunteers, the Garrick family of Garrick-Santo Landscape Co., Mayor Gary Christenson and Channel 7 news for covering the event, and many other community volunteers!

(From L. to R.) Gabriella, Bryna Misiura, Dr. Ed Weiner, Dr. Jon Weiner
Christmas Eve Delivery

Thank you to Pisa Pizza for all of the delicious pizzas to serve our guests on Christmas eve. With our big Christmas day dinner just hours away it was the perfect meal for our guests the night before! Thank you also to Dinah from Cataldo Ambulance Service for the yummy Hoff’s Bakery cheesecakes for dessert.

Encore Delivers!

In honor of Giving Tuesday, Encore Boston Harbor hosted a Feed the Funnel food packaging day to benefit Bread of Life. Encore employees volunteered and assembled over 38,000 packaged, nutritious meals for our families. Thank you Encore for inviting BOL and for helping so many families and kids. And as always, thank you Mayor Gary Christenson for your continued support and being a part of this special event.
EBSB Check Presentation

Each year East Boston Savings Bank hosts a Holiday Charity Auction. EBSB employees, family, and friends donate items that are auctioned off to the highest bidder. The proceeds benefit several local charitable organizations, including Bread of Life. East Boston Savings Bank is a longtime partner of Bread of Life, having raised and donated over 100K for our programs! Thank You for all you do in our community and for helping so many families

Backpack items provided

Bread of Life is collaborating with Everett High School (Massachusetts) to provide 100 backpacks for students in need. Each backpack will be filled with granola bars, juice boxes, pretzels, applesauce and other items to ensure students have access to healthy snacks. Donations always needed and greatly appreciated!
Everett Foundation of Aged Persons Donation

Ann Ahlin from the Everett Foundation for Aged Persons presented a $5,000 donation to Bread of Life. Thank you for bringing tidings of comfort and joy to our families.

Hat and Glove Drive

Thumbs up to Rotary Club of Medford, MA for hosting hat and glove drive for Bread of Life! We hear there’s a friendly competition with Malden Rotary Club too! You’re all fantastic! Thanks for thinking of our families on these cold days.

Standing in the Gap...

On Christmas Eve we received a call from a mother who was new to the area. Having suffered domestic violence, she’d gotten a restraining order against her husband and hurriedly moved. She had no money, no knowledge of the
community and no idea how to get food for her kids. Someone told her to call BOL. Although it wasn’t a pantry distribution day and our office had already closed, our staff opened the door to her and helped her select groceries to tide her over. You could feel the tremendous relief and gratitude in her voice when she realized we were going to help her and her children. We were reminded of that Christmas Eve long ago, when no room could be found in the inn for the Holy Family, but the innkeeper found a way.

Shop and Smile

If you shop at Amazon, every purchase will result in a donation to Bread of Life if you register at Amazon Smile and select us as your designated charity. The big shopping season is upon us and this is a great way to give back! You can sign up at Amazon Smile here.

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