HEART Love & SOUL
Serving The Community

939 Ontario Avenue
Niagara Falls, NY 14305

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New Partnership

Heart, Love & Soul is now a partner with Volunteer WNY Homeless Initiative through The Service Collaborative of WNY, Inc. This initiative is funded under the Volunteer Generation Fund and New York State Commission on National and Community Service. Through our partnership, we will work together to assist with recruitment, development, and placement of volunteers. Volunteer WNY will provide support for Heart & Soul's volunteer projects/events, volunteer trainings, and opportunities to recognize our dedicated volunteers. In addition, we will work together to support Project Connect Niagara—a one-day, one-stop array of resources for residents of Niagara County that will take place at Heart & Soul on July 27, 2016. Transportation will be available for those attending from Lockport, North Tonawanda, and various places in Niagara Falls.

JUST SAY YES & FOOD EXPRESS

Just Say Yes to Fruits & Vegetables is a program provided by the Food Bank of WNY. Pictured are Heart & Soul guests who took advantage of the class on a monthly Food Express day. While waiting for the food to cook, participants did simple exercises with stretch bands provided by the instructor. Good nutrition and exercise is important for a healthy lifestyle.

The Food Express truck, also provided by the Food Bank, delivers monthly produce and other perishable items to Heart & Soul, via a refrigerated truck, for immediate distribution to guests. This program exists as a means of distributing perishable items quickly to those in need.

HEART Love & SOUL

SPRING 2016

SERVING THE COMMUNITY FOR OVER 30 YEARS

MISSION

Heart, Love & Soul is dedicated to feeding those in need – body, mind and soul.

WHAT WE DO

- Food Pantry
- Dining Room
- Holiday Food Distribution
- Community Meetings
- Social Work Services
- Cooking and Nutrition Classes
- Summer Programs for Children

CONTACT INFORMATION

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www.heartloveandsoul.org

The year 2015 proved to again be a busy time for us here at Heart & Soul. Our food ministries were in great demand—more than 126,000 meals were distributed through our dining room and food pantry alone. This number, however, does not include the hundreds of families that benefit each month from food distributions in the dining room, the 282 families that received a food basket at Thanksgiving, the 375 families that received a food basket at Christmas, or the 1,242 families that came in 2015 to receive food from the Food Express Truck. Hunger, or "food insecurity" as it is now more commonly referred to, is certainly being felt by many of our neighbors.

We also experienced an increase in many of our other services—more than 480 haircuts were given, 88 children attended various summer camps and programs, and 51 children received school supplies. The holidays were no exception to the increased need: 37 gift bags were handed out on Mother's Day, 45 Easter baskets were distributed to children, 79 gift bags were handed out on Father's Day, and 21 gift bags were handed out to our veterans on Veteran's Day. At Christmas, 152 children received clothing gifts during our "Christmas Shoppe" project, while 269 children received toys through the News Neediest Fund and Holiday Partnership.

How could we possibly accomplish all this and offer many additional programs such as cooking classes, exercise programs, educational classes, and Bible studies, and host community meetings and other activities? Your financial support and time is what makes this happen. More than 215 volunteers and groups came to our facility last year to donate over 6,624 volunteer hours, and that does not include all the additional time spent to benefit Heart & Soul out in the community. On behalf of our guests, thank you for your generosity and support. Simply put, we cannot do this without you!

Sister Beth

L-r: Angelo Sarkees, Deposits for Food; Sister Beth Brosmer, executive director of Heart, Love & Soul; Joleigh Washuta, community relations director for Modern Corp.; Jo Sbarbati, associate director of Community Missions; and Francis Giles, vice president of community relations for Modern Corp., stand with a Deposits for Food collection container as checks are distributed.

11/8/2015, Niagara Gazette article

MISSION MOMENT

Heart, Love & Soul touches its guests in more ways than just providing nourishment. We share the following Mission Moment with you:

For this issue, our Mission Moment is a story in progress. A gentleman struggling with mental illness who collects bottles and cans for deposits frequents Heart & Soul. He wears a desperately ripped and worn winter coat with a non-functioning zipper. When it's very cold, he wears white socks for gloves. Needless to say, we are concerned about him. We've approached him numerous times, quietly offering him a coat and gloves, but he refuses each time.

So, we have been plotting among ourselves how to get him outfitted for the cold. The long and short of it is we are collecting bottles and cans for him to redeem in exchange for "retiring" his old coat for a new one. In some ways, this is bartering or bribing; in other ways, this is compassion. We know he would be warmer; we also know that we will feel better if he has a warm coat and gloves. Perhaps this is one of those "win/win" situations. This is our hope.

So, my friends, your ongoing generosity to Heart & Soul helps make it possible for those living with mental illness and suffering from the cold to have warmer winter clothing. It also helps the staff to be able to provide desperately needed items in spite of obstacles. Our guests depend on you as they come with various problems from across the whole spectrum of human needs. You are a partner in this ministry; thank you. May God continue to bless your grace-filled lives of faith!

GRATITUDE AND GENEROSITY

As Valentine's Day dawned this year, a special event was being prepared. Invitations were sent, reservations made, donations collected, food ordered, and volunteers committed. On the evening of Feb. 12, the tables were covered with crisp white linen tablecloths and bright red linen napkins. Red carnations and baby's breath added a lovely touch as centerpieces. Heart & Soul guests arrived for an experience of fine dining provided by the Niagara University Chapel community, faculty, staff, and students, as well as friends from First Presbyterian Church in Youngstown.

First off, guests were invited to get their pictures taken. Individuals and families posed for the camera with bright smiles lighting their faces. The portraits were printed immediately, framed, and then given to each individual or family. From there, children were escorted to the front room where volunteers greeted them with prepared activities, games, and where a "kids' food supper" was served. In the meanwhile, adults enjoyed a leisurely dinner with "mocktails" to start, followed by the first course of a garden salad with rolls. After salads were cleared, guests were presented with a delicious entrée of baked ziti and generously sized homemade meatballs topped with Parmesan cheese. The meal was complete when homemade heart-shaped cherry tart pastries were served. The evening provided guests with time for adult conversation while children were occupied with their own activities. It was a scene of pure enjoyment seldom experienced by those who frequent Heart & Soul. Indeed, it was an extraordinary moment gratefully received and generously given.

Clockwise from top left: "Mocktails" (and coffee) are served; children enjoy a special dinner and activities; the Niagara University Danceline prepares salads; the festive table settings are ready for guests to arrive.

NECESSARY SHOP

We have known for some time that our guests struggle to afford the necessities of life. When they are covered by the state of New York, a single person receives $357 monthly. This amount covers rent up to $325, and the rest is awarded to the person in cash in a divided payment twice a month. The average rent in our area is $300 to $325.

A single person paying $325 a month for rent receives the remaining $32 in two payments of $16. When you consider the cost of household items, this does not go very far. Toilet tissue, dish and laundry soap are the number one needs, along with personal items like soap, shampoo, and deodorant. And a senior or a premenopausal woman might need some additional personal hygiene items. Even a coupon shopper and someone mindful of bargains would have a struggle with this. Not to mention buying a stamp or a birthday card, or even a gift for someone.

We opened the Necessary Shop in January to enable our guests to select items every month to help stretch their available resources. The shop is open daily and most people take advantage of the shop when they make their monthly visit to the food pantry.

Heart & Soul takes advantage of local sales, coupons, and many generous donations to stock the shop with the items mentioned above. It has proven to be a very helpful service, with more than 100 visitors in the first few weeks of operation. Single persons are able to select two items a month and families may select up to four items. So far, laundry soap and toilet tissue are the most often requested.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

The Lewiston/Niagara-on-the-Lake Rotary Club celebrated "Giving Tuesday" a little late, and Christmas a little early, on Dec. 2 when they held their annual Christmas party at the Como Restaurant in Niagara Falls, N.Y. Their donations helped to fund a sensory room at the Autism Spectrum Disorder Clinic at Women and Children's Hospital of Buffalo, feed the hungry through the Heart, Love, & Soul Food Pantry in Niagara Falls and Newark Neighbours in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and necessary resuscitation equipment for the maternity unit at Mt. St. Mary's Hospital.

Pictured (r-l): Rotary Club secretary Tom Gerbasi, Jana Mertz from Autism Spectrum Disorders, Sr. Beth Brosmer from Heart, Love & Soul, Karen Conlon from Mt. St. Mary's Hospital, Teresa Bell from Newark Neighbours, Rotary Club president Ron Danielewicz, and Rotary Club president-elect John Hopkins.

AMAZON WISH LIST

For an up-to-date list of items we are in need of, please visit ***www.amazon.com/wishlist*** and search for Heart, Love & Soul. You can add the items we need to your shopping cart and have them shipped directly to Heart, Love & Soul. Please remember to include your name and address so we can be sure to recognize and acknowledge your donation.

AMAZON SMILE

If you shop on Amazon.com, you can support Heart, Love & Soul even when shopping for your own needs. When shopping on Amazon, go to ***www.smile.amazon.com***, sign in and select Heart, Love & Soul as your charity to support. Amazon will donate a percentage of your sale to our organization. Every little bit helps!

WISH LIST

- Rice sides
- Pasta sides
- Ramen noodles
- Corn bread mix
- Grocery carts – hand pull on wheels
- New or gently used towels, any kind
- New or gently used tennis balls
- Toilet tissue: two- or four-pack or individually wrapped
- Laundry detergent – 40 oz. or more
- Small bottles of cooking oil
- Small bottles of dish soap – 14 oz. or more
- Deodorant – men's and women's
- Body wash, bar soap
- Toothbrushes, toothpaste
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Razors, shaving cream
- Reusable grocery bags
- Body lotion
- Bleach – gallon size