

Stewpot Newsletter
September, 2015
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A Different Kind of Birthday Party

Townley Frith, granddaughter of Charlie and Charlotte Frith, Co-captains for the first Wednesday at Stewpot, celebrated her eleventh birthday in a different way. She decided that she did not want the children invited to her party to bring her presents. Instead, she asked that they bring food for the Stewpot. Below is a photo of Townley giving some of the food that she collected to Ed and Cedric.



Stewpot In The Summer

Written by Helen M. Austin, Team Member for Stewpot 2nd Thursday

"I haven't given you a hug yet," Sherry said. I hit the ground running when I got to Stewpot 15 minutes late for my shift and she was already there and busier than usual. In addition to our regular team, four members of our church's youth group showed up and they needed supervision. So it was awhile before Sherry and I were able to get in our standard greeting.

Since 1972 Stewpot, located in Little Rock's First Presbyterian Church and supported by an additional 12 churches, has served a hot meal Monday-Friday to anyone who can walk up the stairs to the second floor. At this writing Stewpot has two paid staff, Ed and Cedric, a board of directors, and umpteen volunteers, many from the same churches that provide funding. Volunteers are organized in teams, most of which divide the work into two shifts: First shift does the food prep; second serves the diners and cleans up.

My church has an active team of adult volunteers, augmented in summer by kids out of school. Having no children of my own, I always get a kick out of the kids; their enthusiasm is contagious. And I feel helping ride herd on them is doing my small part to "train up the child in the way he should go."

Our first summer day at Stewpot, we were joined by Natalie, Helen, James and Andrew and the youth group's leader, Murdock. When I arrived, James, the tallest, had been apprenticed to Larry, a regular team member, to open the

food-service-size cans of chicken noodle soup. It takes a tall person with more than a little brute strength to manipulate the vintage can opener for this purpose.

Though eager to help, the kids didn't seem to have much acquaintance with the inside of a kitchen. First concept to be introduced: When transferring food from one container to another, place the containers as close together as possible. I spent a fair amount of time following them around with spray cleaner and paper towels. Mary Jane, our team leader, suggested I get them to help fill the paper napkin dispensers.

At some point Natalie managed to get a steam burn. Resourcefully, she treated it by filling a disposable glove with ice. "I'm very good at burning myself," she said.

(The next day I called her mother, who fortunately is an R.N., to see how Natalie was doing.

"She's fine," I was told. "I put some cream on the burn. She's just accident prone; the day before Stewpot she broke a toe.")

Part of the prep at Stewpot involves putting packets of saltines and soup spoons into polystyrene cups, then loading the cups onto trays, which is frustrating because the cups keep tipping over. If this procedure sounds odd, it's for ease of service. Trust me, you have to have been there to see how it works. I've frequently done it solo but Helen and Andrew were willing to help and many hands made light work.

Brenda, who picks up the pastries donated by Community Bakery, had her young friend, Darius, in tow. I remembered Darius from last summer and walked up to him with my hand out. But instead of shaking it, he threw out his arms in the classic

"gimme a hug" gesture.

"I remember you," he said. And he gave me a hug. A big one. Not a high five or a fist bump, a big ole hug.

I don't know why Darius remembered me unless it was because of a conversation we had last year, standing side by side ladling chicken and noodles into bowls.

"I think I know that man," he said, indicating one of the Stewpot diners.

"Well, these people aren't any different from me or you," I said. "They may have just made some bad choices or had some bad luck. Or they may be kids traveling across country who have run short on money."

Stewpot sees a lot of the "on the road" crowd in summer -- some itinerant laborers, some just plain drifters. We also used to see young children I figured got free lunches during the school year, but now I believe there are summer programs to pick up that slack.

Anyone who wants a warm fuzzy for volunteering should consider Stewpot. The diners, almost without exception, are appreciative, saying "thank you" and "God bless you" to the people serving. If they realize you're volunteers, they frequently say "thank you for doing this."

If your church or other volunteer organization doesn't have a Stewpot team and you'd like to participate, contact Jan Van Ness (by telephone 680-3739 or email jvanness8@gmail.com).



Stewpot Workers Are Getting Younger Every Day

Townley Frith accompanied her grandparents, Charlie and Charlotte Frith, to Stewpot on a recent 1st Wednesday. Townley

helped her grandmother prepare fruit. She also served potato chips and helped wash the serving trays. She said that she was ready to go again.



Stewpot Receives a \$1,500 Grant



The Stewpot received a \$1,500 grant from the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. The money from the grant cannot be used for food. Nancy Rorex, Manager of the Stewpot, says that the money will be used for a new "Buzzer" system to be located in the small Stewpot kitchen. The church office is not staffed full-time and individuals arriving to cook or serve at the Stewpot must often text or call Ed or Cedric to come down and let them in. The new Buzzer system will allow individuals working in the kitchen to see who is at the front door and remotely unlock the door for entry. **The buzzer system should be installed by the end of August.**

Does Your Team need Additional Workers



If you are a Captain of a Stewpot Team and need additional workers for your team (either temporary or permanent), please contact Jan Van Ness (by telephone 680-3739 or email jvanness8@gmail.com).

Stewpot Video

To See a short video about the Stewpot,
click on the photo below.



Little Rock
Stewpot

Teams need to clean up before leaving!



All teams need to make sure all roasters are cleaned, tables wiped and kitchen area cleaned before they go. Things have been getting lax and Ed is having to stay longer cleaning things that are the responsibility of the teams. Thanks.

Stewpot Highlights 2nd and 4th Wednesday Teams

2nd Wednesday Team

The 2nd Wednesday Stewpot Team is a montage of different types of people and denominations. Mary Carole Polk inherited the job of captain when Vickie Metraier had to quit to take care of her mother. The Team serves beans, hotdogs, chips, fruit and pastries from Community Bakery

Mary Carole Polk lives with her husband of 23 years, Scott, and their three children in Pleasant Valley and are members of 2nd Presbyterian. Scott is originally from England, AR where they have a pharmacy (they are both pharmacists).

Jennifer Bethel is married to Steve Bethel and they have 5 children!! They attend Trinity Episcopal Cathedral and she works as a rep for Michael Kors.

Jonathan Stark is married to his wife Nancy for 34 years this month. He has one daughter, Stacey Hall, and one granddaughter, Sadie. Jonathan works for DHS in the contract support section and attends Park Hill Christian Church in North Little Rock.

Denise Tabor is married to Scott and they have 2 children. They

attend Trinity Episcopal Cathedral and the whole family enjoys playing tennis.

Jane Byrd is our newest member to the group. She has raised 5 wonderful children and has 4 adorable grandchildren. She graduated from the U of A Law School. Jane and her husband, Paul, attend St. Andrews Cathedral and he is a lawyer as well.

Tricia Chaffin is married to Stephen and they have 3 sons. She is a member of Fellowship Bible Church and has been volunteering at stewpot for 8 years!

John Thompson and his wife, the former Jane McRae Finley of Little Rock, are parishioners of the Cathedral of St. Andrew located at 7th and Louisiana streets where they serve as Eucharistic ministers. John is self-employed in management of private investments. John has four children and Jane has two. Jane and John live in Lakewood and have 2 dogs.

Cheryl Hearnberger has been married to Graves Hearnberger for 26 years and has twin daughters. Cheryl is an

Cindy Bequette has been a long time member that recently had to quit because of other service commitments.



4th Wednesday Team

The 4th Wednesday Team is from First United Methodist Church of Maumelle. The team of 15 serves hot dogs, beans, chips, a side dish (sometimes two), canned fruit, and dessert (usually from community bakery but occasionally supplemented by cakes baked by team members). We prefer to have two cooks and nine servers, and we are usually able to do that. This group has been serving for more than the four year. Linda Grossman has

been in charge of staffing our dates to serve. She served as a volunteer for a couple of years before assuming the leadership role, but she is not sure just how long our church has been involved. This is a group of dedicated individuals who strongly support the mission of their church to aid those in need.







From the Clothes Closet.....



An anonymous donor recently donated \$500 to buy underwear for the Stewpot.



Make a Donation to Stewpot

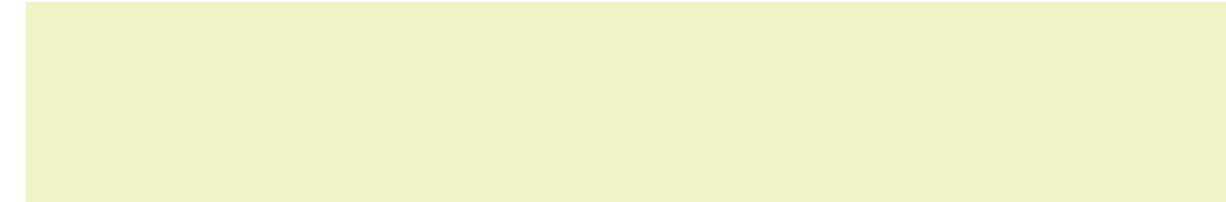


Your donations to The Stewpot have helped us feed the hungry for the past 40 years. Thanks to your support, we are able to supplement our allocations from Potluck, Rice Depot and other food banks with needed milk, canned and fresh food.

Please send your donations to The Stewpot - Little Rock, 800 Scott Street, Little Rock, AR 72201.

Check out our Website

<http://stewpot-littlerock.org>



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