

Cooking With Inspiration

Love And Inspiration -February 8, 2005

Cooking With Inspiration is back! The new series of classes will begin at Inspiration Cafe on Tuesday, February 8, 2005 at 7pm. In honor of Valentine's Day, **Chef Lance Avery of Newly Wed Foods, Inc.** will instruct attendees on how to prepare delectable, aphrodisiac-inspired dishes. This will be an event you won't want to miss! So surprise that special someone on Valentine's Day with your newly-acquired culinary skills. The cost of this class is \$40 per person.

An Italian Flare -April 26, 2005

John Boudouvos of Francesca's Bryn Mawr will instruct attendees on how to prepare delicious Italian dishes on Tuesday, April 26, 2005 at 7pm.

E-mail Utica Gray or call her at (773) 878-0981 ext. 223 to reserve a spot for these wonderful events.

Each Cooking With Inspiration class is a unique combination of demonstration, a little hands-on, and time in the kitchen as determined by the chef. Learn how to make your favorite dish and go home full of tasty samples. Instructors are donating their time, and Whole Foods Market Lakeview is our generous food sponsor. Beginners to intermediate-level cooks are welcome.

100% of the proceeds benefit Inspiration Corporation. Inspiration Corporation assists people in improving their lives through the provision of social services, housing, and employment training in an atmosphere of dignity and respect. ✨

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Inspiration Corporation is saving money by using envelopes for this mailing!

If any of your contact information has changed, please contact Utica Gray at 773.878.0981, ext. 223 or ugray@inspirationcorp.org

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Winter 2005

Be A Part Of Our Mosaic



The Living Room Cafe is moving! Inspiration Corporation's LRC, located in Chicago's Woodlawn community has out-grown its initial location, and will be re-locating to a bigger space in the same community...and we want to bring our mosaic tile mural with us. Perhaps the finest attribute to the current LRC building, is a wonderfully colorful mosaic-mural created by children, families, and community members in 1996, when the Cafe first opened. The mural served as a connection between the Cafe and its surrounding community. We want to renew that connection with you by inviting you to become a part of our inspirational mosaic.

This project provides an opportunity for you to donate funds for The Living Room Cafe and to be a part of our mosaic. Your gift will be recognized on a plaque located next to the mosaic at the new location.

The donation of:

- \$20 can provide a supportive environment for one guest for one day.
- \$40 can provide dinner for one guest for six days.
- \$80 can pay for one week of case management services for three guests.
- \$120 can provide a supportive community for a mother and two children for two days.
- \$200 can provide meals for one guest for one month.
- \$480 can pay for City of Chicago Sanitation and Safety Certification for fourteen Cafe Too students.
- \$1,000 provides a security deposit on four new apartments for Inspiration Corporation guests and alumni.

We hope you will join us in this meaningful undertaking. Please make checks payable to Inspiration Corporation, and put "Mosaic" in the memo section. You can contact Kenny Williams-Buck at kwilliamsbuck@inspirationcorp.org or at (773) 878-0981 ext. 222 for more information.

Thank You! ★

Meet Shiriony

Shiriony is one of the newest smiling faces at Inspiration Cafe. He is a guest who joined Inspiration Cafe less than two months ago.

He learned about Inspiration Cafe one year ago from a homeless friend. Shiriony said, "My friend would disappear, and no one would know where he went." When Shiriony asked, his friend told him that he went to Inspiration Cafe. "My friend bragged about the great food and the milieu." His friend's experience with Inspiration Cafe piqued Shiriony's interest.

After waiting patiently, Shiriony received a referral from his case worker in May 2004 to become an Inspiration Cafe guest. "Coming to the Cafe is like coming home. I am greeted with joy and a cup of coffee in the morning when I come to the Cafe each morning." For Shiriony, the Cafe is a unique space in which everyone has something to offer. When asked what he likes most about the Cafe, Shiriony said, "Everyone's contribution is accepted, regardless, because it is a special gift from them." Shiriony also said, "The guests here are taken at face value and are not judged."

Shiriony has an interest in floral design and is exploring the idea of opening his very own floral shop. He is trying to figure out what he can personally contribute to the Cafe. He wants to incorporate his love of floral design into Inspiration Cafe to heighten the welcoming atmosphere that already exists.

We welcome Shiriony into the Inspiration Cafe family with open arms. Shiriony said, "I am starting the new year with a new attitude. Inspiration Cafe is giving me the opportunity to change my life's direction." ★

The View From Broadway And Wilson

by Christopher Persons, Executive Director



Christmas, Hanukah, Kwanzaa, Eid Al-Fitr. These are some of the special days we celebrate as a whole community. You think about these around this time of year, especially if you were raised in the Christian tradition. I was raised in the Christian tradition—whatever that means. For the Christmas celebration it means putting up a tree, decorations, family, friends, food, drink, and most important of all...presents. Some of these traditions stem more from our historical paganism than anything else and of course today the whole deal has been commercialized to the point of annihilating any meaning whatever. Yet still, what a great season it is—even for a cynical old humanist like me—the lights, the smell of food and fire from the kitchen, the steamed-over windows, the laughter and anticipation and of course...the presents.

My wife and I had our first baby in March of last year so this was Alex's first Christmas and we went a little nuts buying him presents. How lucky for us to be in

the position to enjoy any of this.

So what does this have to do with homelessness? Can you guess? Something about the haves and the have-nots, something about reaching out and making meaning for the less fortunate, something about making meaning for yourself. Here are my radical thoughts (and I hope none of my board members are reading this): it is not enough to go work at the soup kitchen once a year because it's the holidays. It's not enough to think of the hungry and poor at Christmas because that's the time of year to do it. Hunger, poverty and homelessness are not issues that exist only in December. They are year round and Inspiration Cafe can't fix it. Not alone. Not once a year. There are structures in our system that create poverty, poverty leads to homelessness, poverty leads to hunger.

We need to fix the system. Everyday of the year. All of us. And then Christmas and Hanukah, Kwanza and Eid can be meaningful for all. ★

Springfield Success



On Tuesday, November 9, 2004, eleven Inspiration Corporation staff, alumni, and guests, attended a lobbying day in Springfield. They attended to advocate the passage of a state-wide Rental-Housing Support Program similar to that of the Chicago Low-Income Housing Trust Fund and the passage of a bill that allows for the sealing of low-level prostitution and drug felonies.

The criminal sealing bill passed both Houses, with our own alumnus Johnny King being pivotal in convincing Senate President Emil Jones, Jr. (D-Chicago) to call the bill to the floor. This means that some of our clients may be able to better find jobs, and apply for housing and education assistance. Inspiration Corporation alumnus Johnny King was personally

responsible for changing Representative Harry Osterman's (D-Chicago) mind on the issue.

The rental bill passed the House, and it was referred to the Rules Committee in the Senate. There will be a push in January 2005 to pass the rental bill in the Senate. We lobbied hard for this issue, and every Illinois senator received a postcard telling of Inspiration Corporation's housing program and alumnus Gwen's story, a successful graduate of the section of Inspiration Corporation's housing program that utilizes the Chicago Low-Income Housing Trust Fund.

This is a great success for Inspiration Corporation, and it was an amazing opportunity for our clients to watch the legislative process. The impact of our presence was obviously felt, and Inspiration Corporation was well represented. Our star was seen all over the capitol! ★

In Other Advocacy News...

Inspiration Corporation alumnus Johnny King and Inspiration Corporation Community Policy Liason Rian Wanstreet won awards from the Organization of the Northeast. Johnny won an award for work on the Jobs Committee; Rian won an award for work on the Land Use and Housing Committee. Congratulations to both for their hard work! ★

REMEMBER - Cafe Too is open to the public every **Thursday** and **Friday** for lunch from 11:30 am - 2 pm. Mention this ad and receive 10% off your total lunch bill!

The 12th Inspired Art Auction



James McNeill Mesple
Venus Williams As Venus

The 12th Inspired Art Auction will take place on Friday, March 18, 2005 in the Preston Bradley Hall of the Chicago Cultural Center from 6-10pm. The event is Inspiration Corporation's biggest fundraiser of the year and features art from over 100 Chicago artists, including paintings, photographs, works on paper, mixed media, jewelry, pottery and more.

The evening activity includes a silent auction throughout the evening and a live auction of a few highlighted pieces. There will be live music, catering provided by Food for Thought and a full bar. Tickets are \$85 in advance or \$100 at the door. Book your tickets in advance to avoid disappointment.

Last year, Inspiration Corporation grossed nearly \$64,000 from the Inspired Art Auction and there are hopes to exceed that amount this year. Some of the highlights from last year's live auction included pieces from Lee Godie, Nicolosi, Nathan Lerner, Ellen Lanyon and Marc Hauser.

Artists are invited to submit pieces in January and the pieces are reviewed by a jury of artists who make the final decisions on those pieces that will appear in the auction.

Volunteers are needed to make this event a success, so please contact Kenny Williams-Buck if you would like to help at (773) 878-0981 ext. 222 or kwilliamsbuck@inspirationcorp.org. ✨

Last year's sponsors included:

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