



## Inspiration Corporation Lives up to its name with customers, workers

September 12, 2006 - Five years have passed since we first visited the Inspiration<sup>®</sup> Cafe, 4554 N. Broadway, in Uptown.

- [Watch the Video](#)
- [Inspiration Corporation](#)

Created in 1989, the cafe was the brain child of former Police Officer Lisa Nigro who used a red wagon to deliver sandwiches and coffee to the homeless.

"I made eggs Benedict on the street...had beautiful omelets on the street, and coffee and then we grew into a bus," said Nigro.

With volunteers preparing and serving the food, homeless persons dined for free. Three years ago Inspiration Cafe merged with The Living Room Cafe on the South Side. Now the two locations serve 1,6000 individuals with the help of 700 volunteers.

At both sites a safe and comfortable atmosphere is provided for those who drop in. For the homeless a number of training programs are available.

"The main goal is self sufficiency ...and its different for each individual. We kind of look at it as individual journeys," said Frank Lowe, supportive services manager.

Former client Tyrus Mahaffey studied food preparation and is now kitchen coordinator at the South Side cafe.

"Not being able to work quite a few years and not being able to do what I like to do its given me the opportunity to get out and become an independent human being again," said Mahaffey.

Bernice Brown, who came to the organization as a client, is now office manager.

"This is where I am now. The program has helped me with my self esteem. It has helped me get back on my feet and its has taught me how to deal with others and deal with life," said Brown.

This year the organization received a national award for its work.

"That's the power of The Living Room Cafe. That's the power of the Inspiration Cafe. And, that's the power of just being in relationship with people and true relationships," said Nigro To learn more about the Inspiration Corporation , visit [inspirationcorp.org](http://inspirationcorp.org).