

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT SERVICE LEAGUE
UNIVERSITY DISTRICT FOOD BANK
4731 15th Avenue NE
Seattle, WA 98105-4404

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Food For Thought

The Newsletter of the University District Food Bank

Winter 2009

Bon Voyage Carl



The adage that all good things soon must end seemed to not apply to at least one thing at the food bank, the employment of our Operations Manager Carl Ostrom. For more than 22 years, Carl worked with us a few times each week to collect donations from many local businesses, to organize our storeroom into the most efficient operation possible and to supervise our Thursday evening distribution hours. Sadly, in late summer, Carl announced his retirement. He was finally hanging up his food bank apron for good.

No one person is more synonymous with the food bank than Carl. He is employee number two in the history of the organization (employee number one left more than fifteen years ago) but his involvement goes even deeper. As a member of the local Lions Club, Carl helped plan the food bank originally. His 40 years of work in the grocery trade gave him powerful insight into how the day-to-day operations of the food bank might go. So, when Trish Twomey (employee number one) needed a reliable co-worker, she convinced Carl to come out of retirement. Who would have thought she could be so persuasive that Carl would stay for more than two decades? (Continued on page 3)

Our newest community partner, Whole Foods Market Roosevelt Square has agreed to donate 5% of the stores' net sales on **Tuesday, February 17th** to the University District Food Bank.

The timing of this fundraiser could not be better. Contributions from individual donors to the Food Bank typically drop 90% from December to January. And this winter we are still seeing a 20% increase on average to the number of monthly visitors to the Food Bank.

We hope that our Food Bank supporters will take the time to shop at Whole Foods Roosevelt Square on the 17th or at the very least spread the word of the fundraiser to your friends and contacts.

“Whole Foods Market loves to support our community any way we can, our 5% days are just one way in which we do this and partnering with the University District Food Bank was a natural choice! We're proud to help support such a great and giving program and look forward to a long and happy partnership! –Mary Moon Hernandez, Whole Foods Market Roosevelt Square”

WHOLE FOODS[®] MARKET

5% Day

Tremendous Auction Support

In the current economic climate, the forecast was looking a little gloomy for this year's “Take a Bite Out of Hunger” U-District Food Bank Auction, held Oct. 18. Instead, there were plenty of bright spots during the event at St. Demetrios in the Montlake neighborhood, an evening that raised more than \$96,000.

A clam digging party for 10 – led by UDFB foundation director Paul Yunker – sold for \$3,000. And it was a package so nice, they sold it twice. That's a whole lot of clams.

While attendance was down slightly from last year, more than 225 guests bid during the silent auction on tables filled with a diverse range of items, from vodka from New Deal, an artisan distiller outside Portland to a “go green” basket brimming with compact florescent bulbs and reduced flow showerheads.

“There were certainly a lot of generous, giving people in the room,” said Joe Gruber, UDFB executive director.

The popular “Dessert Dash” brought in \$7,000, the sweet segment of the evening a delicious holdover from the auction's earliest days. “We still have a handful of homemade desserts arrive every year in addition to the baked goods that are donated,” said Betsy Wheeler. “It's one of the traditions that goes back to the beginning, when the auction started in someone's basement.”

Wheeler, a former board member, who helped organize this year's event, said she was nervous early in the live auction because items were going for less than they were worth. (Continued on page 3)



The University District Food Bank assists low-income individuals residing within zip codes 98102, 98103, 98105, 98112, 98115, and 98125.

Food for Thought is published quarterly by the University District Food Bank for our volunteers, donors, and the public at large.

The University District Food Bank is a program of the University District Service League, a registered 501 (c) (3).

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Joe Gruber, Executive Director
Bill Lowie, Assistant Director
Kailin Mooney, Operations Assistant
Paul Yunker, Development Director

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Thank You Churches

We extend our thanks to the following congregations for their support of the Food Bank:

Assumption Catholic
Bethany Lutheran
Center for Spiritual Living
Christ Episcopal
Faith Lutheran
Sand Point Community
Temple Beth Am
St. Stephen's Episcopal
University Christian
University Lutheran
University Presbyterian
University Temple United Methodist
Wedgewood Community

Letter From The Director

Dear Friends:

As a write to you today, it is finally snowing here in Seattle after days of speculation. The wind is blowing and the windows of my office are rattling. Every once and a while, a cold draft blows in though the window pane or sneaks underneath the office door.

Even with a sweater on, I get cold, so I adjust the thermostat on our baseboard heater. While not toasty, I'm comfortable. At home, I'll do much the same. For many of our food bank customers, they can't make that choice so freely.



I was casually speaking to one of our customers today about how she was going to spend Christmas. As the owner of a small home cleaning service, her business has been severely hurt by the recent economic downturn. She's trying to hold onto the few customers that she does have and she's trying to afford being a single parent too. As we talked about the recent cold weather and the idea of a white Christmas, she sounded stressed and not happy. I learned that this month's higher than expected electric bill took away the extra money she had saved for her daughter's gifts. While she hoped that her parents would help play Santa this year, she wasn't entirely sure that they could. And the heat in her apartment was already cut down into the 50s so she couldn't imagine a smaller electric bill next month.

I wish I could say that I solved her problems, but I can't. Sure, I encouraged her to apply for the energy assistance that she is qualified for, I told her about a few rent assistance options, and we had a few toys from a recent toy drive that she took home to put under her tree but these things will help only a little. Still, I hope that we've brought at least a brief smile to the face of a little girl on Christmas morning and a little less stress to a mom worried about falling short at the end of every month. I always wish we could do more, but I am grateful for at least what we can provide.

In peace,
Joe

(Spotlight Continued)

Kailin as you can see has many diverse interests. Seeming to be unrelated at first glance they all have one thing in common: making the place, the situation or the person better than she found it. Kailin is well on her way to having the same impact on the Food Bank.

Carl Ostrom

Through four executive directors, at least a dozen assistant directors and thousands (or tens of thousands) of volunteers, Carl has been there. His work ethic is unmatched. He was tireless and he inspired those around him to be the same. In 2006, he was selected as Washington State's Outstanding Older Worker and honored at a ceremony in the other Washington.

When told of his retirement, longtime volunteers expressed their general disbelief. One even joked that we'd have to close the food bank because "it simply wouldn't be the same without Carl around".

Best of luck in your (third) retirement Carl. Please know that there is always a place at the food bank for you if you ever want to un-retire again someday.

Auction Continued

"But people warmed up, especially for the 'Fund A Need' item," she said.

This year's "Fund A Need" focused on the Food Bank's core mission: Stocking the shelves for the growing number of people seeking assistance. In November, more than 1,100 individuals and families turned to the Food Bank per week, up from 900 a year ago.

While organizers are breathing a sigh of relief after tallying the results of this year's fundraiser, preliminary work has already started on next year's event.

Board members, especially members of the auction committee, are always looking for opportunities for sponsorship and for items to be sold during the festive evening, which was catered by Cameron Catering, a company that showed its philanthropic stripes once again by purchasing auction items. For details on donating, or to help on next year's event, please contact Paul Yunker at [paul@](mailto:paul@udistrictfoodbank.org)

udistrictfoodbank.org

Staff Spotlight: Kailin Mooney



The Food Bank is pleased to announce the hiring of Operations Assistant, Kailin Mooney on January 13th. Besides helping Bill in the Food Bank, Kailin will be responsible for donation pick-ups, working with our current supermarket partners as well as building new food donor relationships in the community. As a retired UPS driver, Kailin is more than comfortable behind the wheel of the Food Bank Sprinter Van.

Interested in local agriculture, Kailin works for area farmers at the University District Farmers Market and Ballard Farmers Market on the weekends. Selling local produce is one way that she connects to the environment. An avid gardener, Kailin believes in making the earth better than she found it. At her current abode in the Central District Kailin has improved an unworkable soil by adding compost and leaves.

Animal well-being is significant in the list of Kailin's interests. Recently Kailin started volunteering at Animal Talk Rescue, a non-profit specializing in cat rescue and adoption. In addition to two pet cats she adopted a rescued bearded dragon lizard, Grommet. Cats and Lizards seem like an unlikely pet combo but Kailin makes it work.

Growing up in the kitchen of the Pacific Dessert Company, a business that Kailin's father started it's no surprise that baking is one of her talents. The staff is eagerly waiting to taste her baked scones!

(Continued on page 2)