



Volunteer welcomes chance to give back to food bank

John Kutz has volunteered at University District Food Bank for almost two and a half decades—nearly a quarter of a century! His twenty-four years of service to the projects and purposes of the Food Bank deserve our notice and appreciation. Though he is shy to acknowledge his contribution, his steady service has been truly inspiring.

John moved to Seattle in 1986, when he was 39 years old, though he was familiar with the Northwest from his military service at Fort Lewis in 1969 and 1970. After several years living in Seattle, a friend invited him to do a shift at the Food Bank, and John has continued this work ever since. John is fit and strong, and he's been able to step up to the most demanding of tasks, including unloading the trucks and stocking the shelves. On average he's been putting two to three days a week into the Food Bank, year in and year out.

John describes himself as a loner, but he enjoys socializing with what he calls “all the nice people who work at the Food Bank.” In many ways it has become the community he most associates with, and he is delighted when he runs into other volunteers and staff outside the Food Bank.



John Kutz has volunteered at the University District Food Bank for almost a quarter century.

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

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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

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Letter From The Director

Dear Friends,

Our old home at University Christian is coming down. I'm not sure exactly when or what will be built in its place, but have no doubt, it will look very different than the old brick church with the peaceful courtyard, colorful stained glass, and graceful bell tower that has occupied the corner of 15th and 50th for the past century.

Blocks away, a 24-story apartment building already under construction will rival the UW tower on the neighborhood skyline before several other towers join them. University Temple's transformation will displace ROOTS (the long time young adult shelter) for a few years at a minimum and perhaps even permanently. WSECU recently built their new home on 45th; a twelve-story building will soon stand nearby it. And the Safeway on Brooklyn is not long for this world, scheduled to be completely rebuilt with six stories of housing above it. Not to mention, by 2021, we will have a new light rail station open and maybe even a midweek farmer's market above it. All this is not even everything that is scheduled.

Massive change is planned. Massive change is coming. Massive potential exists with all these changes, but we need to be mindful that this potential is available to us all. Small businesses on the Ave have organized and found a pathway toward some protections but their struggle continues. Who will help ensure that this potential remains accessible for our neighbors, including the many that visit us each week?

Your investments in our mission are powerful. Your support ensures that healthy food remains within reach of all our neighbors. But we need more. We need your voice to remind our local and state government, to remind our community councils, to remind our neighbors that healthy food is not enough. To make our work have impact and meaning, we need financial stability, housing stability, and family wellness to remain within reach as well. The character of the city is transforming, that's without question. However, with your voice, our shared community values of equity, inclusion, and opportunity can be sustained. And, as a result, the power of our work amplified.



In peace,

Joe



Scouts make our greenhouse grow

Over the course of two weekends, local Boy Scout Jacob Van Der Hyde and Troop 166 completed an extraordinary greenhouse build for Rooftop Roots. With the help of his troop mates, Jacob facilitated the complicated construction of our new 8'x16' greenhouse. It will support plant propagation for the garden as well as supply food bank customers with personal kitchen plants starts such as herbs, tomatoes and greens. We now have unlimited capacity

to create all of our own plant starts instead of relying on donations, purchasing them or using up bed space while seeds germinate. Further, volunteers and our summer interns will learn the skills needed to properly plant and tend seedlings as well as maintain a healthy greenhouse environment. We are very grateful for the hard work put in by Jacob and Troop 166 and are excited to fill our greenhouse up with seeds!



Eagle Scout Jacob Van Der Hyde (center), Jack Burns (right), and James Trainer (left) facilitated the construction of our new roof-top greenhouse, above.

Meet Chris Cirillo, our operations specialist

Hi, folks! I'm Chris Cirillo.

I started as the University District Food Bank's Operations Specialist in October. I was born in Baltimore, Maryland and I moved to north Seattle in the summer of 2016, where I still reside.

I've loved exploring the city. My favorite place to be is the Washington Park Arboretum (its northern nursery in particular).

I've also spent a lot of hours getting involved in the community. Lately, most of my time outside of work is dedicated to organizing with and cooking for the Ravena Popup Kitchen. I have cooked and served weekly for almost a year, and I estimate that I've served more than 800 meals in that time.

I'd first found out about the food bank from a close friend about two years ago. I remember on my first trip that I was so drawn in by the selection of bread that I completely blew past the limitations that day. I lost my household card almost immediately and my shopping wasn't even a little



Chris Cirillo hard at work at the food bank.

modest – I tried bagging up like 7 loaves of bread! A volunteer asked me to leave a few behind, so I did, but I remember feeling so appreciative for everything given to me.

Interacting with the other customers and volunteers and staff was such a joy that I came back every week that I could for the next year and a half – and you better believe I got me some bread! I'd recently started volunteering when the Operations Specialist position was posted, so I jumped on it right

away. It's been wonderful.

The bulk of my hours are spent rescuing groceries from nearby stores for our shop and, on Fridays, I'm the food bank's floor manager. Having seen the commitment and care demonstrated day-in and day-out by this place, I truly believe that the food bank is a hearthstone in our community. More than just a place to get food, it can be a place of learning and connection. It has been a pleasure to have joined such a great, welcoming team.

Project focuses on college hunger

Hello everyone! My name is Malak Kudaimi and I'm currently an Emerson Hunger Fellow working on a project related to college student hunger at the food bank. I'm originally from Southern California and graduated from the University of California, Irvine with a degree in Public Health Policy and a degree in International Studies. I'm part of the Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellowship, a program meant to develop leaders in the anti-hunger and anti-poverty spaces through field and policy placements.

My field placement has been in the beautiful city of Seattle at the U-District Food Bank, working to partner with the college campuses in the Northeast Seattle community to alleviate the reality of college student hunger. Currently, the food bank is running a weekly pop-up pantry distribution



Malak Kudaimi

at the North Seattle Community College campus and working on integrating the pantry into the campus. The food bank is also helping UW's Husky Pantry with its expanded operations. Additionally, Lililya, our Community Connector, will soon be holding "office hours" during UW pantry distribution hours to help students enroll in public benefits.

It's been wonderful seeing the

pieces of the project come together, similar to how pieces of a large puzzle come together. My favorite part of the project has been forming relationships with many different community and national partners, learning from their insights and experiences as well as working together towards a common goal. Projects like this truly have to be taken in tandem with the community. I'm grateful to have been given the opportunity to be part of a community outside of my own, and to have been given the opportunity to carry out my love of public health here. I'm also grateful to have had the opportunity to know, befriend, and work alongside the wonderful staff at the food bank, UW's pantry, and North Seattle College. Seattle will always have a place in my heart and I'm excited to keep visiting in the future.

Volunteer: Food bank is part of his estate plan

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The move to the new building from the University Christian Church has been of great benefit to the Food Bank customers, according to John. Instead of struggling in the confined space there on NE 50th, the customers of the Food Bank now feel as if they are in a more wide-open, comfortable food store.

"It's a lot easier for the customers to make choices of good foods here in the new, modern-feeling space," John muses. It's also easier for volunteers, who have the large refrigerator and freezer to store foods and abundant shelf space to display foods.

John was born and raised in

working class neighborhoods in a challenging part of Chicago just after WWII (Cicero and Berwin). Now, with his social security from many hard-working years and with his medical needs covered by the VA, John is very satisfied with his life in Seattle. And yet, even though his resources are limited, he always makes room in his budget for a monthly financial donation to the Food Bank.

"I am so thankful for how much the Food Bank helped me out in years past. It's kind of like I'm paying back now for all the help I received." He hopes that by donating some money on a regular basis he can do his small part to add to the private and public

funding that keep the Food Bank afloat.

"My mother was this way, back when I was a boy in Cicero," he said. "And her dad, my grandfather. They were always going out of their way to help someone else out," in spite of the family's modest financial situation.

"There are so many wonderful, hard-working volunteers at the Food Bank," John says, "About half are young, college students who work with real dedication. I'm happy and most thankful to be part of all that!"

John recently added the Food Bank in his estate plan, ensuring that his support will continue well into the future.

SAVE
THE
DATE



**University
District
Food Bank**

Thanking Our Lucky Stars

Take a Bite Out of Hunger

24th Annual Benefit Auction
Saturday, October 12th, 2019
At St. Demetrios Hall

2100 Boyer Ave East, Seattle, 98112

Doors open 5:30 PM. ★ Tickets Available June 1st, 2019
udistrictfoodbank.ejoinme.org/AuctionRegistration

★
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