FALL 2021

VOICES

HOLY APOSTLES SOUP KITCHEN

VOICE *of a Guest* — *Samuel*

Growing up in Puerto Rico, Samuel always wanted to live in New York. He grew up reading *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* and dreamed of his life here. But as a young man in New York, Samuel struggled with addiction, and ended up staying in a homeless shelter, where he felt hopeless and unsafe.

When he first came to the Soup Kitchen, Samuel, who is in his 60s, was struggling emotionally and physically. Painful neuropathy in his feet made it hard to work and he felt lost, but **when he visited us for a hot meal, he was filled with not just food, but inspiration and joy by live musicians performing during our daily meal service.**

"Coming here was like my therapy", Samuel shared after visiting the Soup Kitchen a few times for lunch. With the help of Jay Alfaro, our Social Services Manager, Samuel applied for a Section 8 Housing Voucher, and was approved. He's now living in an apartment in the Bronx, and with a stable roof over his head, he no longer lives in fear of what might happen to him in a shelter or on the streets.

He's grateful for the peace and stability he's found in his new home, and is now able to focus on his recovery and staying sober. *"I want to keep moving forward,"* he shared.

While our daily meal service has shifted to a grab-and-go model due to COVID-19 and we no longer can have live music, Samuel still feels the hope he felt when he first came here. ***"This is the best place in the world,"*** he said.

Now, Jay is helping him secure a cell phone, so that he can keep in touch with his three adult sons and his grandson, who just turned four. He's also started receiving Social Security benefits to help pay his rent and other bills.

For Samuel, your support has given him the security of housing and a community to turn to if he needs resources and help. All our guests are so thankful to you for providing them with the hope they need to get through a difficult time.

To donate, please return the enclosed reply slip with your contribution or visit www.holyapostlesnyc.org

Social Services in action

If you've been to the Soup Kitchen during our daily meal service in the last 18 months, you've seen a line of our guests waiting for a hot meal. You've probably also seen a slightly smaller line of guests waiting to meet with Jay Alfaro, our Social Services Manager.

Jay handles many of our guests' needs – from organizing their mail and providing toiletries to helping fill out applications for housing and printing job applications and resumes. **For Jay, the most important part of her job isn't one service or action: it's treating our guests with dignity and respect.**

*"They're so used to being disregarded and ignored. When they find someone who's willing to help with some of the most basic things, they're extremely grateful. I'll see some of the Soup Kitchen guests outside and they always greet me and say hello – **it's great having that working relationship with guests. I get to know them as people.**"*

That's why Jay tries to get to know many of our guests' names – the simple act of greeting someone and taking the time to know their name makes a huge impact on our guests. It makes them feel comfortable enough to tell her what they're going through.

Jay recently assisted a Soup Kitchen guest named Nicholas, who first arrived at the Soup Kitchen looking for a hot meal. When he arrived, Jay introduced herself and offered to help him complete paperwork to become a licensed street vendor in New York. As a result, he's been able to work consistently as a vendor in Union Square. With a stable income and secure housing, he no longer needs the Soup Kitchen's services, but Nicholas knows that he is always welcome here for whatever help he needs.

We often hear from guests like Nicholas who showed up for a hot meal, and gradually became comfortable enough to reach out to our social services team for help on their path to stability. When Jay talks about guests who turn their lives around after receiving help through our Social Services department, she says: *"Sometimes, they look like a completely different person."*

Jay Alfaro,
Social Services Manager

When asked what our guests need most right now, Jay offers the three most common requests: legal aid, mental health counseling, and clean clothing. In the winter, we receive an excess of clothing donations but in the summer, we experience a shortage. In the heat, many of our guests sweat through their clothes and desperately need something clean to change in to.

Supporters like you make it possible to respond to Jay's requests, and to the needs of our guests, with action. We know that we can rely on our community to always step up when our guests need you.

In the month of July alone, when multiple heat waves swept over New York City, we distributed over 280 articles of clothing and 320 toiletry kits to Soup Kitchen guests. Other key social services provisions in the month of July include:

80+ guests had 486 pieces mail delivered to the Soup Kitchen address

179 guests received a voucher for a $1 haircut from a local barbershop

17 guests were connected to benefits that increased their economic security

27 guests received referrals for housing, shelter, medical and behavioral health needs, legal assistance, and job opportunities

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VOICE *of a volunteer*

Anne Moy

Every morning at 9am, ten volunteers arrive at the Soup Kitchen to begin the first shift of the day. While their duties are different than they were before the COVID-19 pandemic altered our operations, their dedication is the same: our volunteers are the backbone of everything we do here.

One volunteer and committed supporter of the Soup Kitchen is Anne Moy, who had been volunteering here for about two years before the pandemic. In 2020, she kept "refreshing the website to see when volunteering would open back up." She's happy to be back volunteering at the Soup Kitchen both because she's made friends and enjoys the socialization, and because she's so committed to our mission.

When reflecting about the Soup Kitchen's mission, Anne pondered, *"How could you get hired for a job if you don't have a home? How are you supposed to go to a job interview if you don't have a clean, professional outfit? It's like a vicious cycle. If I don't have any clothes except the ones on my back, how can I present myself professionally? And how can I get a job?"*

Anne knows that the Soup Kitchen offers services like mail delivery, and we provide our guests with clothing when we can. That's one reason she volunteers here – because she believes that homelessness is the root cause of so much inequality. She summed up our mission perfectly in one sentence: ***"If you can't get food, you can't get a step forward."***

Contributing to NYC's Vaccination Efforts

Since COVID-19 vaccines became accessible to the public in New York City earlier this year, we at Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen have been working with community partners to provide our guests, volunteers, staff members, and community members with access to the vaccines.

We've partnered with Project Renewal, the Ryan Chelsea Community Center, and Daybreak Health to offer vaccines to our community. Daybreak is at the Soup Kitchen three days a week to answer questions and to provide the Pfizer vaccine for anyone who requests it.

One of our guests, Arlene, was nervous about experiencing side effects from the COVID-19 vaccine because she lives alone and didn't know who she could call for help if she experienced any side effects from the shot. But then, a Daybreak nurse administering the vaccines gave Arlene her cell phone number to help her feel comfortable and to know she would have someone to call in an emergency. Three weeks later, Arlene returned to the Soup Kitchen for her second dose, and said she felt excited to be protected and to be able to be more social in the future.

At the Soup Kitchen, we're proud to be able to provide the vaccine for our community as we all work to end the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Bite Sized News

Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen Fast-a-Thon

Our annual Fast-a-Thon is coming up this on November 18th! To get involved and learn more, please visit:

https://holyapostlesnyc.org/Fast-a-Thon

Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen Legacy Society

Support New Yorkers experiencing homelessness and hunger for generations to come. Planned giving is a gift that costs you nothing now, is flexible and can often be established easily through a new will, trust or an amendment.

For more information, please contact plannedgiving@holyapostlesnyc.org.

Students at Avenues: The World School have made sandwiches and kindness bags for our guests. During the schoolyear, these students walked over to the Soup Kitchen to deliver sandwiches and toiletries for our guests.

Shopping with a Social Impact

The holiday shopping season will soon be here, and many retailers will give a percentage of your purchases to charities like Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen!

Visit: www.givevia.com/categories for your shopping needs and select Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen as your designated charity to support.

Match Challenge Accomplished!

Over the summer, our friends at Google posed a challenge to the community. They would match every donation made to the Soup Kitchen, up to **$50,000.** We surpassed our goal and raised over **$130,000,** which is enough to purchase ingredients for over **267,000 meals. Thank you!**

Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen

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Recognized by

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