



By the Wayside

• Spring 2007

Hardship Night: April 17, 2007



Monday April 17th 2007 was setting up to be the Perfect Storm. Powerful weather systems from the west and south converged on the eastern seaboard and intensified as they moved toward Maine. The weather forecast predicted heavy wind and torrential rains. People were warned to expect power outages.

At the Soup Kitchen, Steve and Brenda Foley had their own troubles. Since the two church groups scheduled for the evening meal were not local, Steve and Brenda weren't sure that the crew would be able to make it in. Both the Executive Director and Soup Kitchen Program Director were sick. And Brenda and Steve were certain that the usual 200+ people would come to the kitchen for lunch and again for dinner.

They decided to change the menu to American Chop Suey, a hearty meal that is simple and quick to prepare. Before lunch, Steve ground the meat and Brenda began to cook it. By lunchtime, the winds were gusting to 84 mph but the electricity stayed on despite ominous flickers. By 11 AM, Steve stopped his work in the kitchen and started mopping up the rain that was being driven through the dining room windows. Lunch went off without a hitch, prepared and served by 7 volunteers to 221 wet, hungry clients.

The weather continued to worsen, so Steve and Brenda stayed on through the afternoon, cooking, mopping...and answering the phone. One of the church groups called just before lunch to say they would not be able to make it. Brenda says, "Knowing ahead is a big help. Then when local volunteers call to offer help if needed, we can say 'yes!'"

By late afternoon, the meal was ready to serve. Steve was keeping up with the puddles on the floor. The doors opened at 6 sharp. The crew of 24 was made up of one of the church groups, and people who live in Portland near the Kitchen. The 232 clients were glad to have a hot meal but didn't linger, being intent on getting to shelter for the night.

Both Steve and Brenda say that Susan Violet's planning for emergencies like this storm has been a big help. As always, the Coordinators are the first people on the job, checking in with their volunteers to make certain they can come, and calling the Wayside office to report in. It is very unusual for a group to cancel, but, on occasion, it happens. Susan has helped coordinators anticipate the needs and special occasions of their volunteers, and has a list of folks who can help Wayside in a pinch.

"And," Steve says, "People know we're never closed. Often, on nights like that Monday, people will call to offer their help. People who live nearby will walk to the Kitchen to help cook and serve. People get together and carpool. It takes a lot to stop a Wayside volunteer."

Steve's List:

How To Cope With Hardship Nights

Anticipate problems

Communicate with the evening's coordinators

Identify possible replacement cooks
and volunteers if needed

Change the menu if necessary

Start cooking early

Answer all telephone calls



Wayside's Contact Numbers:

Wayside Office: 775-4939

The Kitchen: 828-1613

Messages are forwarded to Steve's cell phone

From the Executive Director, Elinor Redmond: Communication: It Makes Wayside Work

Imagine a web of interconnected threads ... that's communication at Wayside. The office connects with more than 60 church and community groups and many, many individual volunteers. The Kitchen staff connects with those same threads, and all of the guests who eat at the kitchen. Wayside Food Rescue connects with more than 100 food pantries, soup kitchens, and group homes throughout Cumberland and York Counties, and the many food donors who supply Wayside's kitchen and member agencies.

In the office, Susan Violet, Soup Kitchen Program Director, keeps her finger on the pulse of the kitchen, often talking with Steve Foley, Kitchen Manager, several times a day by phone or dropping by the Kitchen. They discuss menus, food requirements, and who picks up what, all the while keeping in touch with the warehouse in Sanford. Wayside works cooperatively with St. Luke's Soup Kitchen, to supply food for their weekend lunch program. This spring, Steve met with each group to clarify their needs. Food Rescue's web connects and branches out on its own from the Soup Kitchen web.

As tenants of Preble Street, we need to take care that we treat the facility with the respect needed for a good relationship. We meet with staff from Preble Street and St. Luke's several times each year to discuss Kitchen sharing and storage, places where we tend to rub against each other.

Much time in and outside the office is spent on communication. We talk with donors, and communicate through this newsletter and correspondence. We meet with the Board of Directors, and funding agencies like United Way, and Cumberland County. Susan is in close contact with the City of Portland, and she does the reporting required for our HCD funding. All of the structures that keep Wayside running require the same attention: insurance contracts, supplies, the landlord, staff reimbursement and benefits.

As I write, Wayside's books are being examined for the annual audit. Our Treasurer, Ray Gauvin and I are in constant communication with one another, and with the auditing firm as we strive to accurately report Wayside's 2006 financial activity.

People are truly the heart of Wayside. We thank everyone who donates money, food or time to keep the links of Wayside's web strong. Together we keep Wayside working.

Thank You Very Much

Dale Kinney, Manager at the Forest Ave. Hannaford, presents a check for \$5883 from the Have A Heart for Hunger campaign. Dale said, "It's no pressure giving, as the money comes from donations customers made at the register." Wayside is very grateful for the corporate support from donors like Hannaford and L.L. Bean, and from the growing community awareness of the need in our midst.



The Value Of a Volunteer

In 2006 volunteers contributed an estimated 45,000 volunteer hours at Wayside. At \$14.08 an hour, a value established by the national non-profit group *Independent Sector*, Wayside volunteers contributed a remarkable \$633,600 of service.

Without volunteers, Wayside would not be able to achieve its mission of ensuring all people have access to the food they need.

The Summer Kitchen Needs You!

FACT: In 2006, Wayside Kitchen served 125,330 meals, a 14% increase from 2005. For the first four months of 2007, the Kitchen is recording a 8.5% increase over the same period in 2006.

FACT: Summer time is the hardest time to find volunteers to cook the meal and serve it.

Ray Gauvin : Answering the Call

Ray was born in Caribou, Maine in 1929, and graduated from Caribou High School. He attended St. Joseph's Seminary for a year and then completed a civil engineering degree at St. Francis Xavier in Nova Scotia.

When he was 21, Ray married Welena Parady, and during their 45 years of married life, they raised nine children. As a young man, Ray worked for a variety of construction companies all over Maine, eventually starting his own engineering consulting business, in part to allow him to spend more time with Welena.

In 1976 Ray began to volunteer for Project FEED, an emergency food depot. He still serves on its Board of Directors, and for the last eight years has been the Treasurer.

In 1988 Ray became an important fixture at the Wayside Evening Soup Kitchen. Over the years Ray has helped Wayside grow from a small church-based volunteer group serving dinner three nights a week to a critical part of Portland's safety net for hungry people.

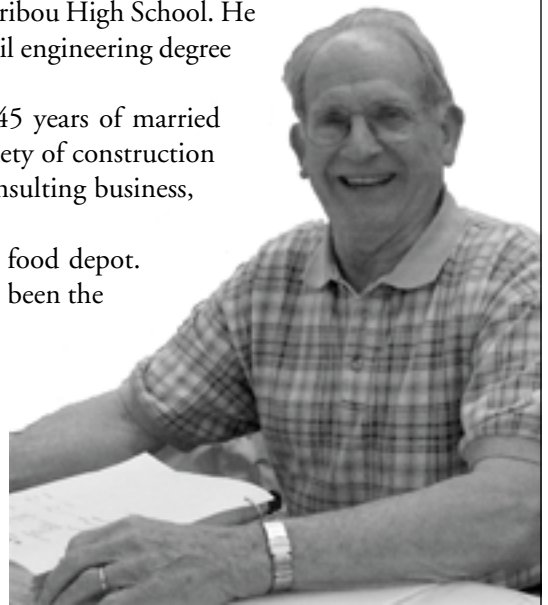
Ray began as a Coordinator, finding volunteers and running Wayside's kitchen and dining room one night a month. For fifteen years he has conscientiously provided this vital service. He is a member of Wayside's Board of Directors, and for the last six years has served as Treasurer, responsible for the day-to-day bookkeeping and payroll for the growing organization.

Ray has long been a blood donor for the American Red Cross, and over the last ten years has been a platelet donor more than 400 times! Although the lifesaving process of aphaeresis is time consuming, Ray faithfully donates his time, and platelets every two weeks.

Two years after Welena's death in 1995, Ray married Connie Jennings who shares his volunteer interests. Together they serve dinner monthly at the Soup Kitchen, and visit local nursing homes to talk and pray with the residents. Ray is a mentor in the Right of Christian Initiation for Adults at St. Joseph's Church in Portland, where he also serves as a Lector, Eucharistic Minister, and President of the Parish Counsel.

Six years ago, Ray became a "money minder" for the Southern Maine Agency on Aging. He meets several clients each month to help them pay their bills and manage their checking accounts. Since 2000, Ray has volunteered with *Meals on Wheels* each Monday at noon.

Ray's whole life exemplifies his commitment to being a friend to those in need. Wayside has benefited time and again from his quiet expertise and generosity. A millions thanks, Ray!



Staying In Touch: Wayside Board Members

Communication with Wayside's 2500 volunteers and long list of supporters is a job and a half. Don Quaid, an independent database program designer, is completing work on the program the office will use for scheduling volunteers.

Donna Murphy, Director of Communications for Spurwink, uses her public relations skills to promote awareness of Wayside's mission. Donna says, "We want the community's understanding of Wayside to grow. The Soup Kitchen is vital to so many individuals and families in need, and the Food Rescue Program is a major provider of food to pantries and other organizations throughout York and Cumberland Counties. The more people learn about the incredible work done by Wayside staff and volunteers, the more they will want to support our efforts."



Calling All Volunteers

Kitchen Program Director Susan Violet says there are many different approaches to finding and keeping volunteers to cook and serve meals at Wayside. Every Coordinator has a different method.

Tracy Greenwood and Elinor Redmond are Co-Coordinators for the First Congregational Church UCC in So. Portland. Tracy says, "We get most of our new volunteers at the beginning of the church year in September on Homecoming Sunday when all the church organizations have tables at coffee hour and sign up sheets. We also have an ongoing sign up sheet on a table at church, and periodically, there is a call from the pulpit. Then, we call our volunteers each month to ask if they can come. Some come faithfully, some come occasionally, some come once...but we continue to make the monthly call. Before we begin serving, we go over the rules, even when all of our volunteers are 'the faithful'".

Fran Evans, who is 86 has been calling to schedule volunteers for both Westbrook Warren and North Gorham Congregational Churches. The churches work together on the 5th Mondays and they always have plenty of helpers. Now Fran, who has been doing this job for many years, is ready to hand it off. She says, "Our church has many new members. I'm hoping that they will take part in our work at Wayside".



Web Wise: Staying Connected Electronically at: waysidesoupkitchen.org



Wayside is inaugurating a new website, designed by Anne Gale. It's a great place to look for information and news. You can also take a survey about your experience at the Kitchen and post your comments.

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STAFF

Elinor Redmond, *Executive Director*
Tim Morse, *Food Rescue Program Coordinator*
Susan Violet, *Meals Program Director*
Steve Foley, *Kitchen Operations Manager*

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