



Cathedral Kitchen News

ISSUE #01
2019

On her first day as Cathedral Kitchen's first-ever executive director, in 2003, Karen Talarico discovered that her makeshift office had neither a phone nor a computer. There wasn't an electrical outlet, either.

Cathedral Kitchen nevertheless managed to serve dinner to several hundred needy people that day, as it had long done five days a week in the gymnasium of the former Camden Catholic High School in downtown Camden, where the beloved duo of Clyde "Pop" Jones (may he rest in peace) and his wife, Theresa, made it all happen with volunteers and a shoestring budget.

Cathedral Kitchen was founded in 1976. I wrote about it for the first time in the 1980s, coming away impressed by the strength, grit and goodness of those who served — and those who were being served as well.

"Carrie will be a great fit ... based on her skills, her commitment to working to help those in poverty, and her compassionate personality," board president Glenn Giveans said in a statement, adding that the organization "is thrilled to have her as our new executive director."

A veteran of leadership positions at Philadelphia nonprofits, Kitchen-Santiago was selected from among 100 applicants during a six-month search. She began work at the end of October, with Talarico staying on to help until the end of the year to help ensure a smooth transition.

"We already touch a lot of people," the new executive director said "and generally speaking, I'd like to deepen the impact we have on some of the folks we serve, especially the meal guests. To help them stabilize their lives so they don't have to come for a meal."

Taking on the top job, a newcomer often finds herself "almost starting from nothing, or in a turnaround situation," said Kitchen-Santiago, 44, a mother of two who lives in Haddon Township. "Cathedral Kitchen is not that. This is a stable, well-funded and very diversified organization in a good position." From Monday through Saturday, more than



300 men, women and children line up outside the kitchen's dining room on the slowly reviving 1500 block of Federal Street.

They come for a hot, healthy, "home-cooked"-style meal prepared under the direction of longtime chef Jonathan Jernigan and served with the help of a dozen or more volunteers among the hundreds who have committed to help the organization.

Seven days a week, a separate commercial kitchen behind the cafe produces 1,600 meals for schools, shelters, halfway houses and other facilities in the city. And twice annually, training classes in the culinary and baking arts — students include people re-entering the community after incarceration — are offered for 17 weeks.

Since that program began in 2010, 330 have graduated, and 22 of them have been hired by the kitchen.

Among them is Mark Woodall, 54, who lives in the city's Centerville section and has been cooking at Cathedral Kitchen for seven years. Before that, he was in a Camden halfway house completing a 36-month state prison sentence for selling drugs, and was a volunteer at the kitchen.

"This place literally saved my life," he said.

Success stories notwithstanding, Cathedral Kitchen and programs like it are seen by some as enabling, rather than helping, people in need. Kitchen-Santiago noted that polls suggest many Americans blame low-income people for being low-income.

"If you are willing to wait outside in the freezing cold before we open, you must be hungry. You must really need that meal," Talarico said. "Who am I to deny you a meal? We're not here to judge. We're just here to meet people where they're at."

Leaving Cathedral Kitchen is "bittersweet," she said. "I work with wonderful people. You can see the heart that's in this place.

"But it's time. It's time for a younger person to take over. And I think Carrie is going to do a great job."

Excerpt from "Despite change at the top, Camden's Cathedral Kitchen is keeping success on the menu" 12/3/2018

Kevin Riordan, South Jersey columnist

The Inquirer
DAILY NEWS philly.com

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Cathedral Kitchen Leadership

- Carrie Kitchen-Santiago
Executive Director
- Bea Gosik
Chief Operating Officer
- Jonathan Jernigan
Executive Chef

Founded in 1976, the Cathedral Kitchen is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

Mission Statement

Cathedral Kitchen uses food to change lives.

We use food to nourish, train, and employ people to offer them hope for improving their lives. We are working to feed and energize a healthy community.

Cathedral Kitchen

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Executive Director's Welcome Message

Dear CK Supporters:

2018 was a milestone year in the history of Cathedral Kitchen. Karen Talarico, CK's first and beloved, executive director, retired at the end of December after almost 16 years ably leading the organization. During Karen's tenure, there was considerable growth. When Karen started in the position in 2003, CK did not have a permanent home, instead using space in the gymnasium of Camden Catholic High School. There were four staff including Karen, three of whom were part-time; and there was one program: providing lunch 5 days a week to people experiencing poverty and hunger. Since then, Karen led the organization through two successful multi-million dollar capital campaigns, CK built a permanent home in Camden on property that CK purchased, there are 43 full and part-time staff, and multiple programs and social enterprises have been launched – all of which are outlined in this newsletter. CK's expansion has been awe-inspiring.



At the same time, every organization that accomplishes fast-paced growth over an extended period needs time to pause and re-assess before launching the next initiative. 2019 will be the year to do this. I have started this process by beginning to meet with many of CK's stakeholders. I have held one-on-one meetings with every board and staff member as well as with many of CK's funders and partners. I will continue to meet with stakeholders through 2019 in order to identify what is working well, where we need to improve and potential areas of expansion. The information gathered will help prepare CK for a strategic planning process that we intend to launch at the end of 2019. This process will enable CK to identify our direction, goals and objectives for the next several years.

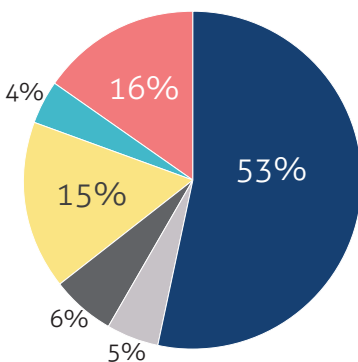
In the meantime, I have immensely enjoyed getting to know the board, staff, volunteers, donors, and partners that make CK such a success as well as the students, meal guests and others we serve in Camden County. I look forward to meeting more of you in 2019 and to working with you and all of CK's stakeholders to continue our success into the future.

Thank you for supporting CK!

Carrie Kitchen-Santiago

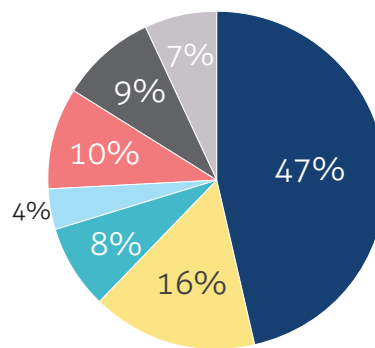
2018 Financials

INCOME



- Social Enterprise
- Foundation
- Individuals
- Corporate
- Government
- Events

EXPENSES



- Social Enterprise
- Meal and Outreach
- Administration
- Culinary Arts Job Training
- Dental and Health
- Depreciation
- Fundraising

Total Income: \$3,377,571*

Total Expenses: \$3,328,203*

*These totals were published prior to the 2018 Audit completion

Culinary and Baking Arts Training



Martin prepping for a day of omelette training.

Cathedral Kitchen enrolls low-income adults who possess limited job skills, some at risk of homelessness, and some of whom have been incarcerated, into our job training program. Through culinary and baking arts instruction, we provide them with demonstrable job skills applicable to a variety of employment opportunities in the broad and growing food service industry.

Martin grew up in Camden, and as a teen was always getting into trouble. At the age of 17, he was arrested for dealing drugs. By the age of 45, he had served a total of 17 years in prison, was shot three times and had never held a “real” job. In December 2017, Martin was coming home from parole and had nowhere to live. With the shortage of affordable housing and his prison record, he was fortunate to be accepted into Volunteers of America’s Community Resource Center. Martin was placed in a shelter and received counseling to assist with his reentry process, which led him to join to our spring 2018 Culinary Arts Training Program.

At the start of the semester, Martin was extremely withdrawn, hardened from his life of crime and time in prison. He had little confidence that he could change and lead an honest life and felt destined to fail. As a result, he walked out of the program several times, as he had in the past, but something was different this time.

CK’s Executive Chef, Jonathan Jernigan, has been teaching the Culinary Arts Training Program for 10 years. During this time, he has trained more than 200 returning citizens. Chef Jonathan recognized familiar traits in Martin. He knew Martin needed to get his life in order and keep busy to feel self-worth. Chef refers to this as “mise en place”, a French culinary phrase for “everything in its place”. Chef would sit with Martin at lunch each day and assign him extra jobs. Martin took great pride in his work and really listened to everything Chef said. In a short amount of time he became a leader in the class and began to mend past relationships, most especially with his 12 year old daughter. CK’s Case Manager, Denise King, helped Martin regain visitation rights and work towards becoming the father he hoped to be.

While attending the culinary class, Martin developed a strong friendship with one of the baking students, Robbin. She was kind-hearted, mature and had a deep religious faith. Reading the bible together, Martin found many answers to his struggles. His favorite passage, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight”, (Proverbs 3:5-6), helps to guide his daily life.

During the final weeks of the training program, students are required to find internships in the field. Martin secured a paying cook job at a nursing home. He returned to CK often and took the initiative to meet with CK Nutritionist, Kate Jones, to ask questions about special dietary restrictions and recipes for the nursing home residents. His work ethic, ServSafe certification, and nutritional education enabled his quick promotion to manager.

At graduation, Martin was presented with an award for overcoming obstacles, and his daughter was present with tears in her eyes to cheer for her dad. Martin and Robbin fell in love while attending the training program. They moved into an apartment in Cherry Hill together, were engaged at Christmas, and plan to be married this year! They have already requested CK to cater their big day!



Martin reenacts when Robbin said, “Yes!” as Chef Jonathan looks on.

Martin is an inspiration to future CK students and truly exemplifies our mission to use food to change lives.

CK Celebrates 10 Years of Job Training!

377 students have passed the ServSafe National Food Safety and Sanitation certification exam

347 students have graduated

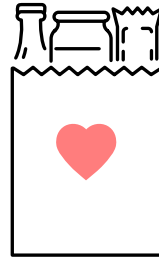
86% of graduates have secured a job





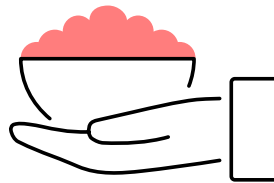
From all of us here at CK... THANK YOU!

99,043
MEALS SERVED
 in our dining room



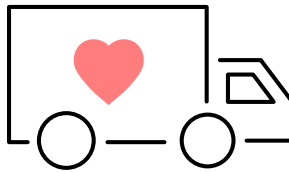
78,865
BAGGED MEALS
 distributed at our
 meal program

10,244
MEALS FOR CHILDREN
 in after-school and summer
 camp programs



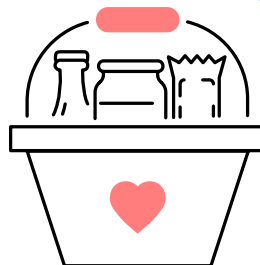
660,000
POUNDS OF FOOD
 valued at \$805,200 was
 donated to the Kitchen

We delivered food weekly to
425 SENIOR
CITIZENS
 at three low-income facilities in
 Camden



10,440
MEALS PREPARED
 for partner agencies serving the
 homeless and those in need

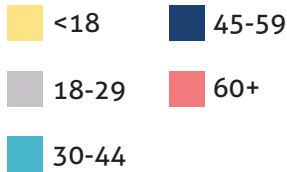
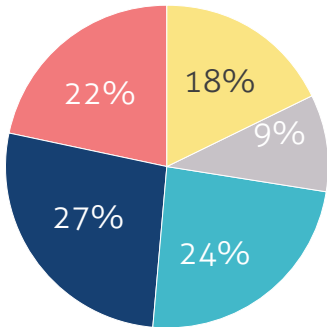
9,544
VOLUNTEER SLOTS
 were filled, totaling 19,108
 hours of service



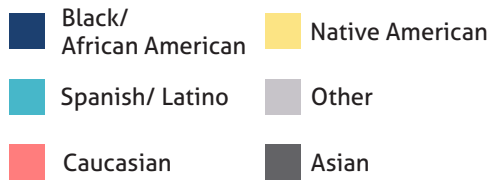
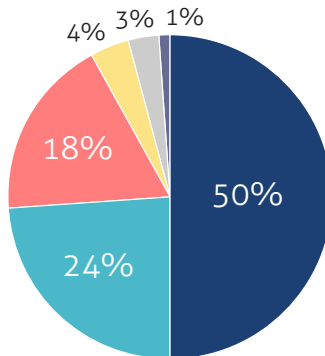
VOLUNTEER HOURS
 translated to more than
\$169,106
 in savings for the Kitchen

Since 1976, Cathedral Kitchen's Meal Program has served all who are hungry, with no ID, fee or registration required. While we do not ask our dinner guests about their personal lives and circumstances, we do value their opinions and want to know how we are doing. Every other year we conduct an anonymous guest survey, which compiles this information and other demographic data. We use this information to make improvements and to share with our supporters. A special thanks goes to Katie Cleary, Campbell Soup Consumer Insights Director, who learned about the skill-based "Volunteer Gig" through her Community Affairs Department. She generously donated her time and expertise to oversee the guest survey and its data analysis. The following are some highlights from our 2018 survey:

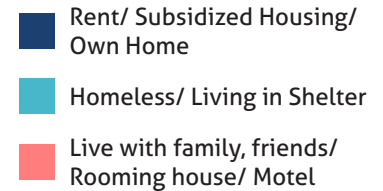
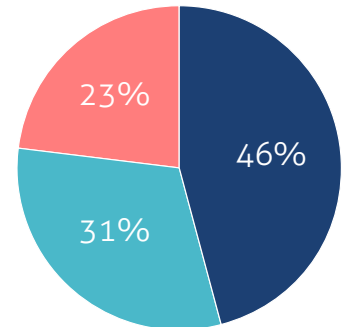
AGE



ETHNICITY



LIVING SITUATION



The meals and take home food CK provides can save a family of four an average of **\$645 per month** and a single adult an average of **\$168 per month**. These dollars can be redirected towards other expenses, such as utilities, rent, medical bills, and education.

11,758
FAMILY MEALS SERVED
A 13% increase from 2017

- **70%** of CK's guests are male, **30%** are female
- **36%** of guests are employed
- **85%** of guests are from Camden
- **98.9%** of guests agreed that "The food at CK tastes good."
- **99.5%** of guests agreed that "The meal at CK is served with kindness."



Campbell Soup's Katie Cleary sits down with a dinner guest at the 2018 survey.

A Record Breaking Year!



A sold-out crowd of more than 400 guests came to support CK's Harvest for Hunger in November, which generated a record high profit of more than \$125,000!

Save the date!
Harvest for Hunger 2019
November 1st



Project Smiles

CK's Project Smiles Dental Clinic is open two days per week and staffed by a team of twelve volunteer dentists and paid part-time staff consisting of a clinic director, hygienist, dental assistant and medical receptionist. The Clinic provides free dental care to residents of Camden, Gloucester City and Pennsauken who cannot afford dental care.

Catherine, age 72, was a forklift operator until she stopped working in 2007 due to a disability. Diagnosed with severe periodontal disease, Catherine has been a Project Smiles grateful patient for more than seven years.

Catherine's oral health was overlooked throughout her life, just like many people living at or below the poverty level. Years of untreated cavities and gum disease resulted in her periodontal disease and ultimate tooth loss. The expense and fears of what could be detected were her greatest deterrents to seeking dental care.

When Catherine first came to Project Smiles, she required extensive cleaning from years of plaque build-up. Several teeth were decayed and she had intense pain and discomfort. For some teeth that were salvageable, crowns were made. For others with little or no healthy bone remaining, the teeth needed to be extracted. The Project Smiles team presented Catherine with a plan and she adhered to it. She had enough remaining teeth for crowns and top and bottom partial dentures to be made.

Dentures and crowns cost thousands of dollars but CK is fortunate to receive a significant discount at two local labs. These reduced fees are the only fees our patients incur and we are often able to subsidize the cost.

Catherine was so grateful to receive financial assistance for her crowns and dentures. She is now pain free. The dental team is working hard to keep her remaining teeth healthy and they have created a care plan that includes bi-annual check-ups and cleanings. Catherine loves her dentures and most especially appreciates the care she receives from the Project Smiles team. She says, "I never feel like a charity case when I come to Cathedral Kitchen. The dentists and staff know that I am scared and always take good care of me. It's a really good thing what you are doing here for the community."

In 2018, Project Smiles Dental Clinic provided free dental care to **830** patients at **987** appointments!



12 dentists volunteered a total of **378** hours, which translates to more than **\$52,920** in savings for the Kitchen.

If you have ever volunteered at CK on a Thursday, chances are you have met CK Meal Captain, Jane Martin. 2019 is a big year for Jane, as she celebrates a milestone birthday and 10 years as a CK volunteer. Jane is an eloquent writer and often shares her reflections from volunteering at CK with friends and family on Facebook. We were so moved when she selected CK to be the beneficiary of her birthday Facebook fundraiser. We sat down with Jane to ask her about her past decade volunteering at CK:

CK: What attracted you to CK?

JM: *I have always had an interest in social justice and underserved populations as well as home cooking so Cathedral Kitchen was a logical choice for me. I'm a nurturer by nature and our home is always filled with loved ones enjoying a meal.*

CK: Why do you volunteer at CK?

JM: *I volunteer because I love our guests as if they are my family, and in reality they are my family - the family of man. They could be any of us, and that is something I strive to keep in mind. Like everyone, my life has had ups and downs so I am keenly aware of how quickly one's circumstances can change.*

CK: What has impacted you the most?

JM: *What has impacted me the most is the relationships I have formed with the staff, the other volunteers, and most importantly, the guests. The guests know me well, and I know most of them by name. I know who likes what food, who wants to be simply left alone, who wants to be engaged, who likes football, who is ill, who is sad, and on and on. My relationship with them is just like my relationship with everyone else in my life. We've shared laughter and tears. They trust me with their stories, which is hugely gratifying to me. I make time to ask about their lives, even if the responses are sometimes painful to hear.*

CK: What made you decide to hold a Facebook fundraiser for CK?

JM: *I am celebrating turning 60 this year and I don't care who knows it! This Facebook fundraiser is going to bring in over \$4,000 when it is said and done, something which makes me feel very loved among my friends. They know how very important CK's mission is to me and how moved I am by my interactions with our guests.*

We want to thank Jane for her countless hours volunteering and sharing her love of CK with family and friends. Happy Birthday, Jane!



Jane Martin and her Co-Captain, Rosanna Innes (center) are a dynamic duo, supervising the team of volunteers, always stressing the importance of serving our dinner guests with kindness and respect.



Jane's Birthday Fundraiser for Cathedral Kitchen

Fundraiser for Cathedral Kitchen by Jane Martin

[Donate](#)

CK's Impactful Social Enterprise



CK's contract meal team prepares more than 500,000 meals annually.

CK has a long history of collaboration with Volunteers of America (VOA), a non-profit organization that manages eight residential facilities including halfway houses for people exiting prison and shelters for women, families and veterans in Camden. Since November 2014, CK has been the contract meal provider for these facilities, preparing almost 1,600 daily meals for their 530 residents. This contract enabled CK to create 13 jobs, including cook, driver and dishwasher positions. The majority of the CK staff are graduates of our training program and/or Camden residents. We value the contract and the jobs it has created but most especially the impact we have providing good, nutritious meals to the residents trying to get back on their feet. The following is a thank you note we received from a woman whose husband recently came out of prison and was living in a VOA halfway house:

Hello! I just wanted to say thank you so much for the wonderful job that your team does! My husband just moved into Fletcher House and every meal he has had so far he said was delicious and amazing. Thank you for allowing him to enjoy home cooked meals again. He lost a lot of weight going through the system in such a short period of time so I'm truly hoping that he will put weight on again by eating good balanced meals more than once a day.

Thank you so much for all that you do for the community and for the residents at VOA. It really means a lot to them to see there are people out there who care still.

Think of CK for your next lunch date or party needs!

Cathedral Kitchen's social enterprise is a mission-driven business that increases CK's ability to sustain itself while also employing Camden residents.

856-964-6771
www.cathedralkitchen.org



Tuesday - Friday
11am - 2pm
1506 Federal St.
Camden, NJ 08105



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