



CK Baking Arts graduate, Rebecca Zayas, found a job she loves at Panera

## Rebecca Zayas's Recipe for Success

Growing up in Pennsauken, NJ, Rebecca Zayas always loved being in the kitchen. She would help to line up the ingredients and watch as her mother prepared her favorite dishes with recipes she knew by heart. Rebecca would come home from school each day and watch the popular food shows on the Food Network. It was only natural for Rebecca to pursue the culinary arts when it came time for high school. Rebecca attended the Camden County Technical High School where she specialized in the culinary arts, was inducted into the National Honor Society, and graduated in the top quarter of her class. After high school, Rebecca was thrilled to be accepted into an 18 month program at the Restaurant School of Walnut Hill College, but due to the cost and need for her to contribute to the family's income, she deferred enrollment.

Rebecca held a variety of clerical and retail positions and at the age of 22, Rebecca became pregnant with her daughter, Isabella. Now with a little girl to support, Rebecca was determined to follow her dream and pursue a career in baking. With her family's help caring for Isabella, she went back to work part-time as a cashier at Shop Rite and enrolled in the Restaurant School. The combined expenses of tuition, raising a child, providing financial assistance for her parents, and commuting, along with juggling the work and school schedule, made the program too difficult to continue. After the first semester, Rebecca withdrew from the program. To get back on her feet, she held miscellaneous jobs but due to health problems, she was unable to work for a period of time. Rebecca had a very difficult recovery, emotionally more than physically. She felt like her life was going nowhere; she did not want to leave the house and experienced deep depression.

Rebecca's sister saw a flyer for Cathedral Kitchen's Culinary and Baking Arts Job Training program and shared it with her. The free program runs for 17 weeks and provides students with hands-on training in the culinary and baking arts, in addition to life skills and financial counseling. Rebecca applied and was accepted into the spring 2019 baking class.

CK's training program was exactly what Rebecca needed to reenergize her dream of becoming a baker. She was learning the same techniques at Cathedral Kitchen that were being taught at the Restaurant School. She excelled in the program and developed a network of supportive friends in class. Throughout the program there are several themed competitions where students research recipes and bake, just like on the popular food shows on television. *(continued on page 7)*



We are honored to have CK Cafe featured in SJ Magazine's 2019 Best of SJ as the best spot to grab lunch!

## BEST LUNCH



"There's so much to love about CK Café: the 4-year-old eatery supports the mission of Cathedral Kitchen, and the nonprofit's culinary school operates the restaurant, preparing mostly Camden residents for jobs. To top it off, the menu is creative and the food is as tasty as your favorite lunch spot in South Jersey. Try the Federal Street – a grilled chicken sandwich with fire-roasted tomatoes, provolone cheese, spinach and chipotle sauce on a ciabatta roll." - SJ Magazine

# Cathedral Kitchen Board of Directors

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**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 in order to help them improve their lives. We are working to feed and energize a healthy community.*

## Cathedral Kitchen

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A member of



# Cathedral Kitchen Welcomes Charles Holmes to the Board of Directors



Born and raised in Camden, Charles Holmes has strong ties to the city. His father was Police Chief for the city of Camden in the 1980's, and his family, starting with his great-grandparents, attended Kaighn Avenue Baptist Church regularly. He was educated in the Camden school system, graduating from Camden High School with honors and a dream to become a Certified Public Accountant.

After graduating from high school, Charles attended Drexel University where he earned a degree in Business Administration with a major in Accounting. From there, he passed the CPA exam and began his career at PricewaterhouseCoopers. He then joined a regional CPA firm, and after eight years founded his own accounting and consulting firm, Holmes & Company LLC, located in Cherry Hill.

Despite several relocations throughout his lifetime for school and work, Charles has remained heavily involved in the Camden community. He is an active volunteer and leader at the Food Pantry at Kaighn Avenue Baptist Church, the oldest African-American Baptist Church in the state of New Jersey, providing fresh fruit, produce, bread, and other baked goods to needy families. Charles has also served on the boards of several Camden non-profit organizations, including the Nehemiah Project Community Development Corporation, Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey, and most recently the Camden Education Foundation, where he served an eight year term.

When asked about how he became involved with CK, Charles admits that at first he knew very little, just hearing bits and pieces from others. "It wasn't until I went for a tour that I became aware of how evolved the operation is; training individuals to be self-sufficient, providing dental care so those patients can enjoy a meal... it's very heartfelt and it makes you feel good, actually seeing the impact." Charles explains that he recently experienced the impact for himself firsthand; two young ladies had visited Kaighn Church with their babies, speaking very little English, and in need of food. The Church was able to use the food CK provides in order to assist the two women, loading them up with essentials to take home. "It really hit home for me in that moment" Charles explains, "it was powerful seeing the impact that we can have."

Charles takes great pride in serving on the CK board and giving back to the Camden community. He says, "The Cathedral Kitchen board is a very involved, working board. It's a board where we use our professional backgrounds to give back, and impact lives in a positive way." He and his fellow CK board members are committed to furthering CK's mission to use food to change lives in Camden.

When discussing the city he grew up in, Charles says, "there is a lot of good in Camden" and we couldn't agree more!

Dear Cathedral Kitchen Supporters,

A lot has happened this year at the Kitchen!

In an effort to help improve the lives of individuals and families who come for meals, we have actively recruited partner organizations to provide more services regularly in the dining room. Volunteers of America (VOA) staff is on site during dinner every Tuesday, helping guests sign up for assistance with various services, including housing, paying utility bills, and obtaining photo identification cards. Transportation is provided for our guests on Wednesdays, to take them to the VOA facility for these services.

Another partnership is with First Step Staffing, a nonprofit staffing agency that started coming to the Kitchen monthly in July in order to help our meal guests get light industrial jobs with local companies. This is enabling our guests who are otherwise unemployable due to homelessness, former incarceration or their work record, to obtain jobs.

We are also improving how we communicate these services to our meal guests. We have added mini kiosks to each table, which list all the services that will be offered during the meal each month and the various programs that the Kitchen provides.

Lastly, we are planning some enhancements in the fall. We are extending dinnertime so that it is less crowded in the dining room. On September 16th Chef Jonathan will begin serving dinner at 3:30 pm instead of 4 pm. And later this fall we will be making some improvements to how guests choose food from the Market Stand.

Cathedral Kitchen is making all these changes in order to more effectively help the individuals and families who are struggling to make ends meet stabilize their lives.

I want to thank the Kitchen's staff and volunteers, particularly the Meal Captains who facilitate the volunteers in the dining room each day, for their hard work and patience as we implement these changes. I also want to thank all of you for supporting the Kitchen. We couldn't do any of this work without you!

*Cami Kloten-Santiago*



## Community Outreach

In 2016, CK expanded its meal program to include food outreach. Realizing there are many more people in the area who experience food insecurity and may not be able to access our facility, CK's outreach provides food and meals to children, senior citizens and the homeless in Camden.



Every Friday, CK delivers fresh produce, breads and pantry items to Urban Promise for their Saturday morning Co-Op. More than 200 residents of Camden and Pennsauken participate in the program. Co-Op members volunteer to set-up and operate the "store". A shopping experience allows everyone to choose the food their family needs and prefers.



Throughout the year, students at LUCY Outreach look forward to Thursday evenings when they serve a hot nutritious dinner prepared by CK chefs. An average of 30 students attend the evening sessions, which include college and career prep, homework assistance, leadership development and mentorship.



# 4 What do Volunteers Think of Cathedral Kitchen?

Cathedral Kitchen couldn't provide meals for the last 43 years to individuals and families struggling to make ends meet without the dedication of many volunteers. Although the staff at the Kitchen always tries to show appreciation to the volunteers, we have never formally surveyed the volunteers for their opinions regarding their experience. That changed this summer. In June we emailed an online, anonymous survey to more than 400 of our regular volunteers. More than 100 volunteers completed the survey, and we learned a lot from their responses.

## Our volunteers are committed to the mission of Cathedral Kitchen:

70% of respondents have volunteered at the Kitchen for more than 3 years, with 22% of respondents having volunteered at the Kitchen for more than 10 years.

**CK volunteers become "part of the family":** 79% said they feel part of the Cathedral Kitchen community. One volunteer wrote: "I have felt very welcome by the staff of CK and volunteers since Day One. The interaction with the guests makes it a wonderful experience."

**Volunteering at Cathedral Kitchen has helped to create empathy and understanding:** 72% said they feel more knowledgeable about issues of hunger, homelessness and poverty, and 66% said they feel more compassionate towards others because of volunteering.

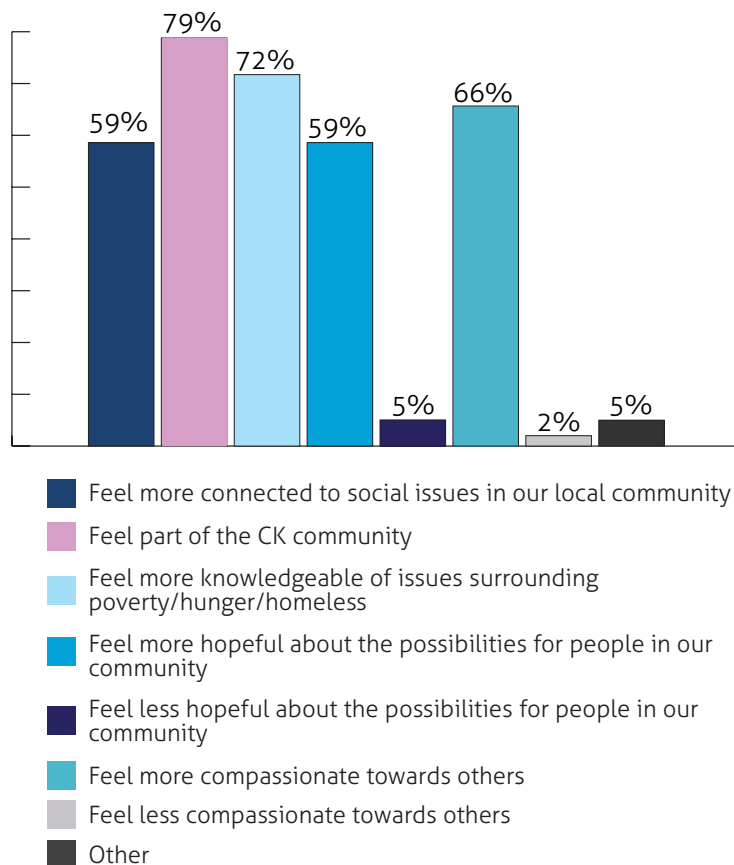
The following responses demonstrate some of the sentiments of those who volunteer at the Kitchen:

- "Volunteering at CK has not only opened my eyes to the issues surrounding poverty and homelessness in Camden but it has also shown me that these issues affect all walks of life. Overall, it has taught me to be more compassionate and less judgmental towards others because everyone has a different story and sometimes life happens. Thus, it is important to give back so that great institutions like CK can run for years to come and in case one day, me or one of my friends needs their services."
- **(Volunteering at CK) "has made me a better person and has helped me to realize what is truly important in life."**
- "Cathedral Kitchen provides that 'light at the end of the tunnel' for so many folks affected by the vagaries of modern life in our society. I and many I volunteer with are much more aware of how fragile life is and how impactful hope can be because of our association with this ongoing beacon of hope. The variety of services offered by and through the Cathedral Kitchen organization is a reasoned, caring and realistic approach to chipping away, one person at a time, otherwise insurmountable obstacles to a safe, secure and fulfilled life for so many."

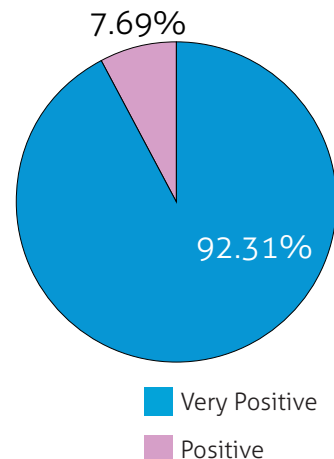
## A big thank you to all of the volunteers that took the time to complete the survey!

In the coming months, we will be making some changes to the meal program in order to improve the experience for guests—we plan to survey our volunteers again in about a year to see how these changes have impacted the volunteer experience as well.

Overall, how has volunteering at CK affected you?



How would you rate your volunteer experience with Cathedral Kitchen?





Cathedral Kitchen is excited to introduce a new and easy way to register our volunteers! VolunteerHub is an online portal that allows you to sign up for volunteer opportunities as they become available, expediting the sign up process as you will be able to see availability and select dates that fit your schedule. VolunteerHub comes with plenty of exciting features, including the ability to create a profile, record hours, and receive notifications of special events and new projects.



Please visit our new site for volunteer opportunities at [www.cathedralkitchen.volunteerhub.com](http://www.cathedralkitchen.volunteerhub.com) and click the "Create Account" link in the top-right corner to create your account. You will then be directed to a list of volunteer opportunities. Just click the "Sign Up" button next to the opportunity - that's it!

## To our Volunteers...



Some of CK's meal captains and morning set-up crew



Some of Project Smiles volunteer dentists and staff

*We would like to thank all of our volunteers who report for duty week after week in order to help us carry out our mission to use food to change lives. We truly appreciate your ongoing support and dedication... we wouldn't be able to do it without you!*

# Rooftop Garden in Full Bloom



Rows of planters are situated on the rooftop of the CK Café, and produce is flourishing thanks to Rosanna Innes and her team of volunteers! Rosanna, CK's Thursday night meal captain, is also a master gardener of Mercer County, meaning she has completed a 20 week educational certification program and performs a number of volunteer hours in the gardening community. Rosanna's family has a long history of volunteering at the Kitchen; her mother, Rita Nardi, was one of the original "casserole volunteers" preparing meals in her home to be served at CK. When Rosanna heard that there was a need to oversee the garden, she gladly took on the challenge.

Rosanna and her team of volunteers have put in many hours during the past few months, with numerous weekly visits in order to harvest, water, feed, weed and observe the garden's progress. The results speak for themselves; an abundance of bell peppers, tomatoes, and basil have been harvested and are prepped and served in CK Café menu items. The team has also been growing nasturtium, an edible flower, and rosemary, which have been used as garnishes for catering platters. Extra produce does not go to waste, but instead is shared with dinner guests at the marketstand that is set up in the dining room every night. The Rooftop Garden has definitely become a spot of interest for both dinner guests and CK staff alike, as the thriving plants can be seen from the street below. "It is so remarkably satisfying" Roseanna says about watching the garden flourish, "seeing the plants grow and supply produce is a very special thing, and it is a wonderful opportunity to provide another area of interest to the Kitchen."



*Pictured from top: The garden, before and after  
Basil, tomatoes, and nasturtium flowers that will be used in the CK Café  
A platter prepared for a lunch meeting in the Café; garnished with nasturtium flowers and rosemary*



*Chef Jill presenting Rebecca with her prize (donated by A.C. Moore) for winning the muffin competition*

Rebecca's baked goods always received high marks in the competitions, but it was her apple crumb muffins that were most memorable and won first place. Rebecca also excelled in the classroom, always scoring at the top of the class. She received a 97% on the ServSafe exam, a national food safety and sanitation certification highly regarded in the food industry.

Throughout the culinary and baking program, students receive job search assistance from volunteers and staff. Rebecca began her job search online and applied for an overnight baker position at Panera's. With no previous food service experience, Rebecca's CK training and ServSafe certification made her resume stand out. She was hired and in less than one month received her first pay increase.

When it came time to select recipients for awards at graduation, the CK team unanimously chose Rebecca for the "Most Likely to Succeed" award, sponsored by Wanda P. Hardy, Executive Director of the Financial Wellness Institute. CK Baking Chef Instructor, Jill McClennan said, "Rebecca was always a hard working student who paid attention to the details. Reading and scaling recipes was always done with care so her products were high quality. She was a creative student who wanted to try new techniques and pastry items, and she was always willing to help the other students when they needed it. Every day she was a pleasure to have in class, even if personally she had some things going on, it never affected her work negatively."

It has been a few months now since Rebecca began working at Panera's. She works the overnight shift, five days each week, from 9:00 pm – 5:00 am making breads and desserts for the next business day. She is applying all that she learned at CK, both in the kitchen and the classroom. Ms. Hardy's financial literacy sessions taught her the importance of savings. She has enrolled in Panera's 401 k plan and is saving for the future to purchase a car and apartment for her and her daughter. She says, "Panera's is my dream job. It is the best income and benefits I have had in my life. It's hard work but I love it. I hope to become a manager one day." Rebecca is on track to achieve that goal. She begins training for the next certification level of baking at Panera's in a few weeks.

Rebecca misses the company of her classmates, Chef Jill, and the CK team. She returns to CK each month to attend the monthly Alumni Networking sessions. She says, "I am so thankful to Cathedral Kitchen for helping me to better myself and get back on my feet. My head's in the right place now and I am able to work towards a bright future for my daughter and me."

*-- Cathedral Kitchen has graduated 368 previously unemployed and underemployed individuals since the program began eleven years ago. Many of our graduates are single parents working to build a career to improve the lives of their family.*

## Nickels for CK

Those nickels add up fast! Cathedral Kitchen has been selected by Whole Foods Market Marlton and Whole Foods Market Cherry Hill for their "Nickels for Nonprofits" program.

Now through December 31st, every time you use a reusable shopping bag at **Whole Foods Market Cherry Hill** and **Marlton** locations, you can donate your nickel per bag at checkout to Cathedral Kitchen. Your donation will help us use food to change lives in Camden.

Thank you to Whole Foods Market and to everyone who donates their nickels!



Join us for a very special evening of food and fun!

Cathedral Kitchen's 13th Annual

# Harvest for Hunger

Food & Wine Tasting  
Live Auction

Friday, November 1, 2019 7:00 -10:00 PM  
Collingswood Grand Ballroom

Individual Tickets: \$75 - Reserved Tables of 10: \$1,000



Presenting Sponsor:

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