

TIME IS AS VALUABLE AS MONEY

Post-Halloween, the signs of the holiday season work their way into our daily lives: store displays, television commercials, and countless ads remind us that it is time to give, give, give -- which typically translates into buy, buy, buy. At Moveable Feast, however, giving does not just mean dollars and cents: it also means becoming a volunteer.

Regardless of your religious or cultural background, it is easy to get caught up in the season and the sense of caring that seems to be infectious during this time of year. And at Moveable Feast, this is music to our ears.

Each Thanksgiving we are fortunate to be able to offer a little something extra to our clients. On Saturday, November 22, Swinow Building Systems will provide Moveable Feast with 50 Thanksgiving dinners. These turkey meals, 25-30 pounds each, are sumptuous packages delivered to client families by our staff and volunteers. Smiles abound, not only on the faces of the recipients, but on those giving their time to help someone less fortunate. The following week, Thanks-

giving-themed grocery bags are prepared for delivery. And our daily meals will offer delicious Thanksgiving fare prepared in our kitchen.

With Thanksgiving behind us, Moveable Feast begins developing menus for the upcoming holidays.

On Christmas Day, while many operations are closed, Moveable Feast is bustling thanks to a returning group from the Beth El Congregation. These dedicated volunteers, who basically run the show, will help prepare, cook, and deliver special holiday meals to our clients as well as the comfort of human contact.

Not surprisingly, Tom Patrick, our volunteer manager, gets inundated with telephone calls from folks caught up in the holiday spirit, wanting to volunteer. Often

enough Tom has had to turn down prospective volunteers -- a nice problem to have. But that doesn't mean that we send them away.

Tom might redirect a volunteer to another agency. Or he may suggest a small gift donation, in the form of a toy for one of the children we serve, or generic stocking

stuffers or toiletry articles. (Clothing is not recommended due to sizing problems, but articles such as gloves, socks, and hats are generally safe bets. And even items like blankets, throws and afghans work

well. Some very generous people donate microwaves, which are always in demand.) When we receive articles to distribute, staff members carefully examine the needs of our clients and make sure that each article is put to good use. Our clients are always thrilled and touched by these gifts.

After the hectic holiday season, business continues as usual here at Moveable Feast. The week after Christmas is an ideal time for volunteers to participate, as many people, particularly students, have off before New Year's. This is a perfect time for young people to fulfill community service hours.

Ultimately, Tom would like to remind those who have never volunteered for Moveable Feast that we are here 52 weeks a year and there are many ways that one can volunteer, whether it be for our daily operations, or for one of our special events. The gift of time is amply appreciated. For further information, you can speak to Tom directly at 410.327.3420, ext. 31.

“Love is not a volunteer thing, but volunteering is a love thing”

SAVE THE DATE

Dining Out for Life 2004

Moveable Feast will be holding its annual Dining Out for Life event on Thursday, April 29, 2004. For those who may not be familiar with this event, Dining Out for Life offers you an easy and fun way to enjoy a favorite pastime - dining out - and support Moveable Feast at the same time. Each year a variety of different restaurants agree to donate a percentage of their receipts from April 29, 2004 and the funds raised will help Moveable Feast provide nutritious home-delivered meals to hundreds of people living with HIV/AIDS.

Thousands of people take part in this event because the restaurant industry is giving them the opportunity to enjoy a festive evening with friends and family while doing something simple to make a difference in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Another way to help is to become a volunteer Ambassador. Ambassadors are a huge reason Dining Out for Life is such a success! Volunteer Ambassadors work in participating restaurants on the night of the event. They help spread the news of the event prior to April 24, and answer questions posed by patrons of the restaurant on the evening of the event. Additionally, Ambassadors thank diners for their participation and collect optional contribution envelopes as well.

Although the date is several months away, plans for this occasion are underway; therefore, we are seeking Ambassadors now. We look forward to having past Ambassadors return for the event, and welcome new Ambassadors. As an Ambassador, you can “throw a big party” for your friends and not spend a penny. Just invite them to have dinner at your assigned restaurant. How often does one get to do that? For further information on volunteering, please call Jeff Burch at 410.327.3420, ext. 11, or via email at jburch@mfeast.org.

