

Pass It On®...

Get up early and give back.

On a Sunday morning so cold the only people on the streets are the unhoused, the Rev stands, wearing an apron, near the entrance to a warehouse. A line of people gathers outside the Reverend's ministry. There's free coffee while they wait. Volunteers inside arrived early to get cooking: Egg casseroles, pasta, hamburgers and hotdogs, French toast, fresh fruit and fresh salad. While the warming stands are being stocked, the Rev offers a brief sermon and prayer. This is his congregation, and he knows what they need: inspiring words about pushing through hard times, asking God to help find a job, a blessing on the nation, a humble ask that all present will find peace.

At some time or another, all of us will experience the anxiety that comes with uncertainty and the heartbreak that comes with tragedy. In these times, a good friend is good medicine. One of the regular volunteers expressed why he has kept showing up every Sunday morning for the past 20 years: "The Rev was there when I needed a friend. I'm just repaying the favor."

Being there when somebody needs a friend can provide the reassurance they need to keep going. And you don't have to be an expert at it. There are just a couple of things you need to be good at. Being nonjudgmental is the beginning. You don't need to solve the person's problems; simply listening is enough. Sometimes, saying "It's OK, I'm here with you" is all a person needs.

As the patrons of the Rev's breakfast ministry file in, they are greeted with smiles, warm food and compliments from folks who will be with them for the next couple of hours. Every volunteer has a story about redemption, about rising above all odds, about a desire now to pay it back. "We don't turn anybody away," the Rev says. "Some people need us more than they need the food. And we need them."

Some of the people serving have lost loved ones to drug addiction or were addicts themselves. There are those who lost jobs and came back when they were on solid ground. What they all have in common is being in a place where they know their morning is going to be a little bit better.

"We got hot food and warm hearts in here!" the Rev shouts out. "Amen," comes the response. Amen.

Give Back... PassItOn.com

By The Foundation for a Better Life®

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