

Kathy Anderson

Tuesday and Friday mornings Verbena and I get up about 7am to make hot 7 grain cereal, coffee and pan fried potatoes. We then load up tables, dishes and signs into my truck to carry across town to a corner that is close to a popular part of town for foot traffic then set up our breakfast creations not forgetting an umbrella for the probable drizzle. Often we'll have fresh fruit as well as juice and granola or other cold cereal, soy milk and good conversation from neighbors and new friends. Speaking for myself this humble experience is an important expression of what healthy food and compassionate people can do to make a stressed out world better one corner at a time.

Poverty is violence and one expression of that violence is hunger...says a Food Not Bombs statement on wikipedia. I think another expression is homelessness. We share food with people in an open and respectful way. Not by making them jump through bureaucratic hoops that are designed to control, humiliate, and often punish people for being poor. We offer food to all human family members thereby teaching ourselves and others how to co-exist in peace.

Our mornings on the corner allow us to help people who need directions for where to go to for help, or we lend a shoulder to a weary, sad traveler. We get to know children and stray kitties, and teach about nutrition, healthy living and acceptance. We are creating peace.

Patti in Arcata has been sharing food with people 4 or more times a week for three years now. Lately she has been visited by the police who told her to stop her efforts or have to answer to the Health Department. There has been no violence or other criminal behavior at these picnic sites so why are the police concerned? What threat to society could these peaceful gatherings be involved in that could warrant

this intimidation?

In these hard economic times, with a growing homeless population we are coming together and helping each other with bare essentials. Food prices are rising, no new housing is being built so we must help our neighbors because all of the state service budgets are getting cut and we poor folks are left to care for each other.

Humboldt County is trying to replace the timber and fishing industry with tourism and service agencies to attract people with money to visit here and spend that money. Business and property owners see the poor and homeless as a drawback to the image that they want to project so they encourage local government officials to get rid of homeless people. As people who live in the 4th poorest county in California it is necessary that free food become more and more available to our community members.

Drugs are a symptom of the pain in the community and hunger ravages the minds and bodies of those unfortunate enough to get mixed up with them. Breakfast is important for everyone, but for some it means much more than usual because food reaches all 5 senses of the human body and when it is served in an attitude of love and acceptance it can invigorate the very soul of the person receiving.

I love feeding people! They are genuinely happier after the exchange. There is love happening at these little gatherings, like an oasis in the desert we make the difference between caring on for some folks and going without if we weren't willing to share.

If you don't like what we do then just let us be, if you want to join our efforts please do, you are needed!

Kathy Anderson, former Director Arcata Food Endeavor and Arcata House

