

Spring 2024

Waterville Area Soup Kitchen

The Lighthouse

More than 90,000 meals served



Happy Anniversary to The Lighthouse



In May we will celebrate 2 years of operation at the Lighthouse.

During our 1st month, we served 763 meals. Today we do that every 3 days.

By the end of this May, we will have served more than 100,000 meals from our kitchen on College Avenue!

- We served lunch 3 days per week



- We offer breakfast and lunch every weekday
- The Lighthouse is a cold weather warming center
- We are a community resource center
- Our clients have access to valuable social services

Recent Awards

Catalyst Grant

Last November, WASK was thrilled to receive a 2023 Catalyst Grant from **Kennebec Savings Bank**. This grant of \$30K, awarded over three years, is committed to upgrading and improving the heart of operations - our kitchen! Our staff put great thought into how best to improve operations and two issues stood out - capacity and efficiency. The Lighthouse kitchen now has a new high BTU 6-burner stove, reducing the time for large pots to boil thus increasing the amount of pasta or soup we can produce. We also added much needed automation with more commercial, mechanical food prep equipment to significantly decrease the time required to produce delicious, healthy, and plentiful meals. When a single meal calls for 120 lbs. of potatoes, mechanical help with peeling them is key. These wonderful and welcome improvements will help us feed our grateful community for many years to come.

Exceptional Volunteer of the Year Award

On April 25, the **Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce** will host its 61st Annual Awards Ceremony. At that special event, the Chamber will honor our own Carla Caron as the Exceptional Volunteer of the Year! - **Congratulations Carla!**

We at The Lighthouse know how critical a role Carla plays in day-to-day operations. In addition to being our Board of Directors President, she is 'hands-on' almost every day. There is no task at the Lighthouse that Carla doesn't tackle. She orders supplies, picks up donations, organizes volunteers, interfaces with social service agencies, represents WASK throughout the community, and addresses Waterville City Council meetings. She mops floors, does laundry, hauls trash, and cleans. She decorates the dining room, fields questions, and schedules repairs and services. Jumping in wherever needed, we all know that Carla prefers to spend time talking to our guests.

In the two years that the Lighthouse has been open, Carla has established herself as a critical resource to many among the vulnerable in our local Waterville community. People ask for Carla daily, and she knows all by name. To some, she offers simple, concrete help - a bandage, a pair of socks, a hat, a ride to the clinic. To others, she offers less tangible yet more critical help. She will sit and listen. She may offer advice if it's needed, or a hug or prayer when it's welcomed. She has cried with many. What she does not do is judge - not ever.

Carla's gift is that of loving acceptance and genuine welcome of everyone, in any circumstance. She is a consistent presence who filters out the nonsense and honors what is real - the humanity in everyone. Thank you, Carla, - for all you do.



Our Gratitude Abounds

City of Waterville Provides Significant Support

On behalf of the many volunteers and guests of the Waterville Area Soup Kitchen, the Board of Directors wishes to express our sincere gratitude to the City of Waterville for their ongoing support. The City Council recently approved \$50K for the soup kitchen. These funds will be divided between operational costs and increased capacity as we seek sustainability in our funding streams.

The \$100 Club Continues

Become a Member Today

\$100 is only 27¢ a day

In November, the Waterville Area Soup Kitchen launched a fundraiser, dubbed the \$100 Club. The goal was to inspire 1800 people to donate \$100 each, which would fund operations for a year.

The campaign was aided by two notable media campaigns.

In January, the Morning Sentinel published an article by a valued supporter of ours, Amy Calder, profiling the Lighthouse and promoting the \$100 Club. Many readers responded with donations, some specifically citing Amy as the reason. In February, WABI visited our dining room. Again, mass media amplified our efforts, and donations followed.

This time, our stalwart supporters, Bruce and Doreen White, got involved, offering to match the first 10 donations. Bruce went further, beating the bushes to find more matchers for 10 donations each.

We are tremendously grateful to Colby College, Central Maine Motors, Central Maine Power, Mitchell, Tardy, and Jackson, the Eaton Peabody Foundation, and an anonymous donor. And of course - to Bruce and Doreen! To date, our campaign has raised more than \$30,000. Thank you to all members of our \$100 club!



Emergency Warming Center Update

We Made It Through Another Maine Winter!

While it was relatively mild for most of us, it was long and difficult for those without a home. In January we extended our hours to include afternoons, to help the most vulnerable in our community stay warm and safe. In addition to providing a warm refuge, we expanded relationships with partners who bring services to our guests. We have hosted job and substance abuse counseling, mental health providers, social work case management, and art therapy, with hope that convenience will enable people to connect with services and make positive changes in their lives.

We have welcomed Operation Hope, OPTIONS, Career Center, Maine General Harm Reduction, Family Planning, community para-medicine, and Maine General SNAP nutrition, among others. As winter abates, we plan to keep our afternoon hours, continuing to connect people and services. We have met with Faye Nicholson and other representatives of REM and hope to collaborate going forward. We are grateful to Jackie Dalton for her extensive service at the warming center, and we excitedly look forward to forging a path of opportunity to happier and healthier living for those in our Lighthouse community.

Waterville Area Soup Kitchen

PO Box 1494, 38 College Ave
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WE HAVE A NEW WEBSITE ADDRESS!

OLD
www.watervilleareasoupkitchen.com



NEW
www.wtvsoup.org