



# Newsletter

February 2024

“Neighbors helping Neighbors”

Reducing hunger in Alamance County by preparing and delivering nutritious meals.

## What's New

Check out our [new Facebook Page by clicking here](#).

On Tuesday Jan 23, Donna Poe hosted our first operations meeting to gather input from volunteers and the community. Our next meeting is tentatively scheduled for April 16th at 10:30am in the Fellowship Hall at Swepsonville United Methodist Church. All our volunteers are invited to attend. Here are some of the highlights from the January meeting:

### **Update from AI on kitchen upgrades:**

1. Vinyl behind sinks to protect the walls
2. Stainless behind the stoves to protect the walls
3. New Sinks - big for pots & pans, hand wash sink
4. Grant paid for a new freezer but there's no space inside so we'll need to build an outdoor storage facility that might include either a second freezer or space for dry storage.
5. Need ideas for grants for 2024 - here are a couple of suggestions:
  - a larger ice machine to help cool down the soup for storage in the refrigerator
  - a new hot water tank under the new sinks - Sue said that will also help with soup preparation if it was an instant on hot water system.

**UNC Masters Student Project:** The UNC Gillings School of Public Health has asked us to host an intern this summer. We're talking with a masters student in nutrition about possible projects that would benefit SSM and help fulfill our education mission while giving them valuable experience. Here are some projects we've talked about,

and we'd like to hear your ideas, too. The UNC intern will start June 24th and work with us for 6 weeks.

1. Helps fulfill our mission of teaching
2. Looking for suggestions on problems the student(s) could work on:
  - More eco friendly packaging for the food
  - Find healthy sources for food when we don't cook (snack packs)
  - Survey clients for their feedback, need to make sure the survey is simple
  - Class is in April - would need to provide input by March
  - How to attract more volunteers
  - Need to figure out how to train and do orientation for kitchen help

#### **Discussion about volunteers:**

- Val talked with Alamance Community College about getting more volunteers. Some ACC students will be working with us the week of Feb 12th.
- Donna is talking with the Mebane Women's Club about coming in once a month to help with packing the food.
- In addition to getting volunteers what about adding a shift in the evening to allow us to produce more meals? Many volunteers can only work in the evening.
- Add a volunteer to do simple stuff like opening cans and washing dishes? Today they opened 90 cans.
- Schedule - Monday is a prep day and figure out the cooking schedule. Tuesday is cooking. Wednesday is packaging and Thursday is delivery.

#### **Ideas to improve operations:**

- Need to codify things. For example, how many cans and pans do we need to make chili (it takes 4 double pans for 140 meals).
- We need backups for everyone - Donna / drivers, Second Harvest, etc etc.

#### **Need some ideas for fundraising, especially if the numbers grow.**

- For example, adopt a family for \$8 a month (\$2/week) so we get regular donations.
- Do we know what an average meal costs?
- Can't afford biscuits and gravy any more - the price has doubled - we make 16 gallons of gravy.
- To be sustainable long term we need regular fundraising.

#### **What problems are drivers are having?**

Soup containers spill. proposed solutions

- Plastic tupperware-like containers like Chinese soup
- Disposable cardboard containers like Panera. We tried this the week of Feb 5th and the drivers seemed to like them!
- Put all the soups in a separate box

**What's on the Menu**

**Delicious home-made food!  
Here are some of the meals!**

**Meal 1:** Roasted chicken, sweet potatoes, dressing and dessert.

**Meal 2:** Turkey sandwich, pasta salad, cranberry and fruit.

**Soup:** Cabbage, potato and kielbasa.

You can see pictures of the meals on our [Facebook page](#).

Yesterday I heard a rumor about butter, but I'm not going to spread it!

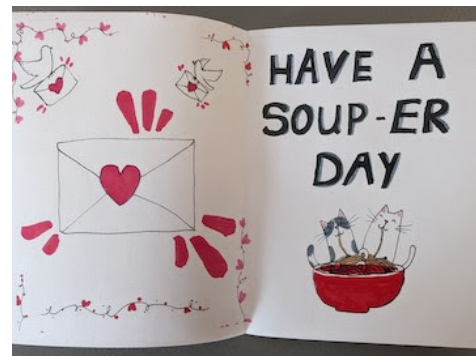
**\*\*\* Fundraising Meeting on Feb 29th @ 5:30pm**

We are a fully volunteer organization and all contributions help us feed friends in Alamance County. If you've got ideas, or want to help out, please consider joining us Leap Day 2/29 at 5:30pm at Swepsonville UMC in the Fellowship Hall for our fundraising meeting. Help us cook up some ideas!\*

**Community Activities**

**Thank You!**

- Thanks to Stephanie Durham for our new logo!
- Thanks to Kim Boggs and daughter Kira for the Valentine's Day cards!
- As always thanks to our many volunteers!



## How Can You Help?

### Volunteers Needed

- **Sous Chef** - we are always looking for help chopping veggies and prepping for the cooks
- **Bakers** - if you like to bake this is a great opportunity, contact us for additional details
- **Packers** - help us pack the food for delivery
- **Drivers** - food deliveries are every Thursday starting at noon from the Swepsonville United Methodist Church
- **Writing thank you notes** - for those who want to volunteer once in a while

You can sign up as a packer or driver at our [Signup Genius Page using this link](#).

### To help those in need!

**PayPal** - you can donate via [PayPal using this link](#) or scan the QR code and it will take you to the Stone Soup PayPal donations page.

**Contact Us-** [stonesoupmenus@gmail.com](mailto:stonesoupmenus@gmail.com)

Stone Soup Menus  
PO Box 785  
Graham, NC 27253

Call us at [\(336\) 539-1821](tel:(336)539-1821)

**Special thanks to our partners:** churches especially our friends at Swepsonville United Methodist Church, local farms, community gardens, restaurants, stores, Second Harvest, S.A.F.E., other food ministries and our many volunteers.

