

Kitchen on the Street

A Hunger to Help

by Rhonda Cagle



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“She was in the school cafeteria, collecting the leftovers the other children had left behind,” Lisa Scarpinato recalls. “We listened as a clergy member who knew her told us her story. This little girl relied on the school lunch program as her primary source of meals, often going without regular food on the weekends. She would quietly gather up the discarded leftovers from the school cafeteria so she and her brothers and sisters would have something to eat at night. We decided that we could do something to help this little girl and other children like her.”

That “something” Scarpinato refers to is Kitchen on the Street, a non-profit organization she and her husband, Vince, founded. Unlike other food banks or assistance programs, Kitchen on the Street partners with local schools to make prepared food available directly to children in need. According to Scarpinato, these children, identified by a school nurse or official, have limited access to food banks or other sources of help.

As a result, the school becomes their primary source of food and nutrition.

“When school is not in session, many of the children miss meals,” Scarpinato explains. “Kitchen on the Street provides these children with Bags of Hope. Filled with prepared main meals, granola bars, and other pre-packaged food, they prevent children from going hungry.”

Currently, the agency provides more than 300 meals per month through distribution programs in three Valley schools. Through partnerships with Costco, Target, Wal-Mart, Trader Joes, and others, Kitchen on the Street is able to purchase pre-packaged food in bulk and at discount. Volunteers meet monthly to prepare the bags of hope and the all-volunteer staff adds a note of encouragement to every bag.

“Children are the most vulnerable victims of poverty,” Scarpinato says. Her voice resonates with a quiet confidence as she continues. “In this, the greatest country in the world, no child should go to bed hungry. That’s why Kitchen on the Street exists; to turn hunger into hope... one child at a time.”

Kitchen on the Street is a qualifying agency for the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit, a dollar-for-dollar credit against an individual’s Arizona state tax liability. To make a donation or to learn more about the agency, visit www.kitchenonthestreet.org.



Lisa Joyner-Scarpinato