

THE DISH

The Community Meals Newsletter--
connecting community to issues big & small

THIS WEEK'S MEAL INSIGHT:

This week, our fajita recipe calls for cumin **seeds**. Using whole seeds brings a richer flavor, indeed, because once their ground their flavor diminishes with time. Seem like a pain to grind your spices? Consider this: stored whole, they will last longer and bring richer flavor to your food. You can use less for better taste! To make it easy, pick up a mortar and pestle (talk about cooking as therapy!) or a simple coffee grinder.



POVERTY IN PRINCE GEORGE'S

Almost 1 in 10 residents live in low-income households. But what does poverty look like?

It may be hard to see poverty in a place like College Park. There aren't tent cities like in DC. Poverty as it is experienced in the suburbs is often much less visible.

Poverty looks like having no personal space-- sharing a house with too many family members. Poverty looks like being used not having a phone because you can't pay the bill. Not having a place to cook your food--perhaps only a microwave. Not having access to the mental healthcare or being able to have an on-the-job injury properly treated. It looks like waiting for the bus in ten degrees to go and pick-up a free bag of clothes or food, or maybe coats, even worse to find that there are no food or clothes or coats left.

All of this exists in the mix and mingle of the surrounding world where others are experiencing life as usual, with their healthcare provided for by employers, with plenty of space--or too much--plenty of food--or too much. Sometimes neighbors are struggling, and it's hard to tell. And sometimes it's hard to say, "I need help."

Enter Community Meals--where you can receive a meal regardless of your ability to donate. No questions asked! Where perhaps in one season of life you can't donate, and in another you can. Or the way you help is by volunteering your time. Or by simply receiving, you grant others a gift--the ability to share out of their abundance.

SPOTLIGHT ON KITCHEN STAFF



You may already be familiar with Jesus. Jesus and program director Amy Caruso put their heads together last January and began planning menus with just \$4000 seed money. Jesus brought years of experience from Mexico cooking and in the U.S., too. He has always had dreams of one day returning to Mexico and opening up a restaurant for the poor, so the vision of Community Meals was right in line with these hopes.

Jesus brings to the kitchen much wisdom about life, seeing each human as valuable in the sight of God. "Somos todos hijos de Dios," "We are all children of God" he says frequently. When cooking, his romantic side comes out—he always has a ballad playing. When not working hard, you will find Jesus sharing his love of life with close family and friends.

One small anecdote. Many people in the kitchen are people of faith and will often say "Gracias a Jesus" (Thanks to Jesus) and Jesus will say no---"Gracias a Dios" (Thanks to God).

Community Announcements

+ We are still looking for someone(s) to help us with our garden this spring. Do you enjoy gardening? Would you like to be part of an intergenerational team to bring healthy food to the Community Meals folks?

+Community Meals site also distributes free meals to the community twice a month on Thursdays. Our next restaurant meal distribution is February 10th. These are delicious restaurant meals.

+Have a clothing need? Please contact Amy. We have a pop-up clothing thrift shop thru Thursday, February 3rd

