

Martin de Porres House of Hospitality

225 Potrero Ave
San Francisco, CA 94103
415-552-0240

"To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul"...Simone Weil

Summer 1996

Dear Friends,

Many of you have written telling us you enjoy our newsletters sharing our philosophy of service, compassion and love. Occasionally, we get a phone call saying; "We agree with your philosophy, but, what does Martins actually DO?"

Martins is primarily a soup kitchen, open 7 days a week, serving 9 meals; 4 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 1 brunch. Our kitchen is housed in a beautiful facility, with original art work gracing our walls, and a wonderful garden which is a scene of beauty, serenity and peace. We have 3 separate bathroom facilities, 2 for men, and one for women, all wheelchair accessible. In keeping with our philosophy of hospitality our guests are welcome to enjoy the surroundings the entire time we are open.

On an average we prepare 700 to 900 servings at breakfast, and 2,000 to 3,000 servings at lunch, including a take out service. One guest might eat 4 bowls of soup, another barely one bowl. Many of our guests come to Martins as much for the human contact as for the food.

Twice a week we have showers and distribute hygiene and health products. We also have a special services day, where a medical van comes. During this time we serve broth and bread, and snacks. We help with emergency situations, have holiday celebrations a number of times a year and provide the opportunity for individuals and organizations, schools, churches, etc., to experience direct, hands-on service to the homeless. Martins has an eyeglass program when funds are available. We do social service and health care advocacy for our guests; filling out paperwork, setting up appointments, taking them to doctors, and distributing information regarding homeless services.

At David House, a separate location, we provide housing for volunteers and guests. It is at David House we have our Hospice room, and this year we have had 2 people grace us with their presence up until their last breath. In caring for the dying, they need 24 hour a day care in addition to our ongoing work at the kitchen.

When one of our guests dies we are often called on to claim the body, cremate it and conduct a memorial service. We also find ourselves corresponding and doing hospitality for their families, keeping a connection with the son, daughter, mother, father that they had lost in life.

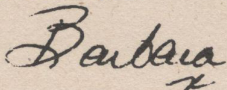
Summer of 1996 marks several milestones in Martin's history. 25 years ago Martins served its first meal on 23rd street. Ten years ago we moved into "new" Martins at 225 Potrero. It has been an amazing 25 years. People come to Martins day after day to be fed: the stomach with marvelous homemade soups, stews, salads, the spirit with the touch of a hand, a greeting at the gate, the renewal of the soul, as our roots grow deeper, stronger in the earth and amongst each other.

We do all this on an average of \$15,000 a month. Going on the low side; that is 11,200 breakfasts a month, and 40,000 servings of lunch/brunch a month. That is about 29 cents a guest.

What do we really do? We serve, we love, we love to serve. We are human, we are broken, but we are also having the time of our lives. We still have an outstanding mortgage on David House which we have promised to pay off in the next 2 years. One thing we are not is fund-raisers. (This, Is an appeal for money!)

At Martins we do a little of this, a little of that, with a lot of enthusiasm and foolishness perhaps, but with a great abundance of Love. We thank you all for your part in our miracle we call Martins.

In God's Light,



Barbara Collier
for the Martin De Porres Community