

SFSP News

Minnesota Department of Education

Food and Nutrition Service

Welcome a New SFSP -- Pastor Paul's Mission

Pastor Paul's Mission is a busy place from the time the doors open at 8:00 a.m. for breakfast service until the doors close at 1:00 p.m. when lunch is finished. That is not nearly the end of the day, as work goes on around the clock. Behind the scenes there is food preparation, cleaning, packing grocery bags of food, and getting ready for the next day.

The huge mission building, once a Russian Orthodox Synagogue, is located on the near north side of Minneapolis. Now neighborhood locals and anyone else can come and have a good, hot breakfast starting at 8:00 a.m. sharp. It is equally a social congregate for people to find out who's up to what and what's new around town.



At promptly 9:00 a.m., when breakfast is over, the "Grocery Shelves" begin at 9:30 a.m. Lines of people, overflowing into the street, laughing and talking with children running and playing are all waiting in line to pick up bags of groceries to take home. Bags contain mostly perishable items, some canned foods, always cereal, and even cans of cappuccino on occasion. Almost all is donated surplus food on the market networked in from all over the state by truck and distributed by Pastor Paul's Mission to seniors, disabled people, and families needing food. Some walk their bags home, some load their cars, and some just sit right down and munch.



At 11:30 a.m. the "Food Shelves" close for the day and at 12:00 noon lunch begins. People once again are lined up waiting and as their turn arrives, they are formally seated by Big John. Trays are immediately served to each and lunch is underway. Within minutes, the attractive downstairs cafeteria is full and buzzing. At 1:00 p.m. the doors to Pastor Paul's Mission are closed for the day. Approximately 100 breakfasts and 300 lunches are served each day and 10,000 pounds of food distributed to 600 people. One half or so of all meals served daily are to children.

Pastor Paul, ordained minister since 1978 is nondenominational and has a business background. The combination of ministry and business seems to get good things done on a big scale. His philosophy of using good business principals to serve the needs of the community now results in the redistribution of approximately 10 million pounds of food a year to people who need it.

Need I say more? Well, I do... one more philosophy of Pastor Paul's is "go to work, forget about yourself; therefore, meeting the needs of others will take care of your needs." He also has a small business on site where people may train on small packing machines and by marketing these skills can gain employment in the public sector. Thirty people have established full-time careers thus enabling them to take care of themselves and their families.

Focus in the future will involve more food distribution especially perishable foods, and increased on site training to create jobs for people in the community. "God helps those who help themselves..." with a boost from Pastor Paul. WELCOME TO THE SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM!

