

A Little Thing Called a Bread Run

by Adrienne Sullivan

“Dumpster diving” and passing out free food have been hallmarks of the Bioregional movement ever since our genesis among the San Francisco Diggers in the mid-1960s. Lately, with waste collection costs rising and landfills filling, some local producers of perishable food have realized that it is in their best interest to give away their day-old, unsaleable product rather than pay to have it hauled to the dump. Here is one recent recruit’s story of her initiation into this practice, and the way she has made it her own and brought more people into the circle. — the editors

I still remember the day, over 4 years ago, when I attended my first Bioregional Meeting. Someone announced, “We are looking for volunteers for the bread run.” Curious, I piped up and asked “What is a bread run?” Two veterans, Jim Selin and Beth Lewis, gave me a brief explanation and offered to take me along and show me how they did it. I was amazed at the quantities of food we collected, and grateful to them for showing me “the ropes.”

I decided to take it on, and have gradually expanded my efforts to include about 20 volunteers. Some are friends of mine, some come from local churches, and some come from Americorps. We collect food from 3 different restaurants in town: Bread & Company, Panera, and Starbucks. We are responsible for 25 pick ups, 7 days a week, at five different locations.

We pass what we collect on to various non profit organizations, such as The Ronald McDonald House, Operation Stand Down, The Salvation Army, The Campus for Human Development, The Women’s Rescue Mission/ Family Life and Hope Center, Trevecca University, The Dominican convent, St. Luke’s community center, and many more. If you know of a deserving group, or would like to help do pickups, please get in touch—new volunteers are always welcome! We’ll take you on a few “practice runs” before you go solo. Pickups usually start at about 6:00 pm and take an hour or two.

If you are interested in finding out more, contact me at:

adriennesullivan@hotmail.com or reach me on my cell phone at 615-430-6772.

Adrienne Sullivan is an avid environmentalist and bread lover. This article has been provided courtesy of the Green Living Journal, a project of the Center for Holistic Ecology and the Cumberland Green Bioregional Council.