

A BEAUTIFUL STORY

The Help and Emergency Response Shelter

Several weeks ago, a lady (I'll call her Ruth) came in to our shelter with very little. She is a lady, let's say "over 39", who has a warm and engaging smile, and very gentle way about her.

During her first week here she mentioned that she liked to cook and bake, and that she had done so for many years. When we received donations of things like fresh vegetables and fruit, she would make something special because she couldn't see "this good food going to waste".

She started out making cakes. Then graduated to soups, chicken, mashed potatoes, tomato casserole, etc., etc.

She began telling us her "story". She initially learned to cook from a family member. Then, later went on to work for a lady who loved to entertain, so she taught Ruth how to cook dinners that included lamb and asparagus, and wonderful breads, etc. However, in order to make enough money to support her family, she eventually had to leave there, give up cooking, and begin a new career driving truck for many years.

So, when she came here, and saw all the fresh food that was donated, she began cooking and baking again, and used the other clients and even the staff as "judges" of her old and new recipes. In the meantime, someone donated several "Southern Living" Magazines to the shelter, so Ruth began experimenting once again – much to the delight of the staff and other shelter clients.

She talked about how much she loved cooking and her dream of getting into the catering business. So, I called an old friend, Ron, who owns Kate's Catering, and asked if he would be interested in talking to Ruth. He said yes, so Ruth called him and arranged to cook a luncheon for him (and the staff, as well).

Well, today was the day! The staff purchased the food and decorated the conference room with tablecloths, candles and flowers, and Ron joined all of us for lunch. We sat Ruth next to Ron, and they hit it off immediately! The menu consisted of Rock Cornish Hens, a vegetable casserole, rice, baked pears with cream cheese and cinnamon, asparagus, braided sweet bread, etc., etc. and ended with two apple pies (two different recipes) and a carrot cake with cream cheese frosting. (I know, your mouths are watering as you read this!).

In a nutshell, we all ate very well, Ron loved the cooking, he and Ruth hit it off, and she will be meeting him this coming Saturday to observe his operation, in preparation for joining with him on large catering affairs.

She is delighted! We are delighted! Ron is delighted! And all of us are stuffed!

The End (to a true and beautiful story)!