

The Community Soup Kitchen is an organization that began with a small group of individuals concerned about the lack of any centralized free meal service in the New Haven community. All of these individuals were affiliated with the Yale Divinity School. The generous offer from the Salvation Army of the use of their kitchen on Chapel Street along with food and financial donations from individuals and churches enabled these people to begin serving a free meal once a week in October of 1977.

The Community Soup Kitchen soon became a place where individuals could receive a meal, find sympathetic conversation, a sense of home, and relief in a caring context. The need for such a program was evident.

Since October 1977 the program has expanded. With the assistance of a Yale Divinity School intern, in February the meal service was expanded to Tuesdays and Saturdays from 12:00 to 2:00. The number of people now being served is 20 to 40. Community and student volunteers joined, with there now being fourteen volunteers involved. As of July 1 a full time VISTA volunteer will begin to coordinate the program for the next year, and there is a part-time worker for the summer months.

An organizational structure for the Community Soup Kitchen has also been developed. The Soup Kitchen Committee, composed of volunteer and paid workers and participants in the services, meets every two weeks to discuss and plan the menus, food pick-ups, time schedules of volunteers and to investigate referrals and possible donors. An Advisory Board has been formed to deal with matters of policy, budget, hiring; to provide a liason with other community organizations; and to provide professional advice. The Advisory Board is composed of four Community Soup Kitchen volunteers and four community members. The four community members who have dedicated considerable time and energy represent the Downtown Cooperative Ministry (DCM), Dwight Hall (Yale University center for coordination of volunteers) and the Christian Community Action agency (CCA).

There are many areas of need. There is always a need for more food, donations, and volunteers. Our immediate goal is to find a permanent home in the community that will allow us to serve meals every day. And most important, we need community support to insure the program's services in the future. Any assistance will be greatly appreciated. Please contact Diane Welborn at 393-2308 (Home) or 436-1408 (Dwight Hall).

Thank you.