

I am nominating Lisa Skelley for the Equity and Human Relations Award. I have worked with Lisa for the past few years while volunteering for Grace Diner at Grace Luther Church in Culver City.

On paper, Lisa Skelley is Culver Cities Grace Lutheran Church Program Director. However, what Lisa really is, is a director of food and essential services for the Culver City community in need.

For many years Lisa has overseen "Grace Diner" where once a week a warm meal was served in a restaurant style manner in the Churches Auxiliary Center. This all changed once the Pandemic hit in 2019. Lisa quickly saw the immediate need from the ongoing diners to the Culver City area people that now found themselves in a food insecurity situation directly because of the Pandemic. Lisa changed gears immediately and transformed Grace Diner from a one night a week service to the community to five days a week service. This was not an easy feat with all the restrictive COVID-19 guidelines, but with countless hours and sure determination Lisa quickly orchestrated a team of volunteers and set the proper Pandemic protocols in place to serve the community in their time of need.

For this award, Lisa fits all the criteria for the nominee.

Works with an Underserved Population: Besides feeding the unhoused and low income, Grace Diner serves professionals, middle class families, that have been financially impacted by the current Pandemic. Lisa and the Diner team serve over 1,000 meals a week.

Motivates others to serve: Besides being a shining role model for the community and her volunteers, Lisa is truly loving and kind to her diners. She motivates both the diners as well as the volunteers in a remarkably calm and loving manner. It always amazes me that she knows everyone she serves by name and addresses them personally each time. In addition, I have come to admire her tactfulness in how she approaches everyone that comes to Grace Diner. Lisa never asks too much but just enough to let them know we are here for them and care about them as an individual, a human being with intelligence and feelings. She goes beyond the "hand out" she becomes their friend and mentor.

Directly involved with those served: This is one of the most remarkable things that I have seen Lisa master. As a person in need, we all know how difficult it is to feel appreciated, needed or have anything of value to give to another. The last thing that person wants is to ask for help. What we all really want is the opportunity to pay it forward and show our worth. Lisa gives them that opportunity. I have seen time and time again the transformation of an individual that came in defeated and hungry, only to see weeks later a stronger more confident person who maybe now helps others through volunteering with Grace Diner. That is HUGE! For the individual and well as for the community.

Serves a broad Population: As stated above, the population in which Grace Diner serves has grown from unhoused and low income to all food insecure people regardless of their socio-economic groups.

Assists in meeting the needs of others: This is a given. Lisa helps assist in the needs of the Diners as well as of the organizations in the Culver area that want to collaborate in helping the community. She has worked with Culver High School young volunteers in reaching their volunteer hours, with Feed Culver in orchestrating the logistics with help funding Grace Diner as well as organizing the myriad of volunteers, food banks, FoodcycleLA, Culver Palms YMCA, Copia and many others to all help each other help the community.

Service is based on Urgency/Need: 100%. Grace diner started serving the needs of the Culver city community and Lisa Skelley has transformed the program to immediately fit the urgent needs of the community during a Pandemic.

Must reside and or be employed in Culver City: Lisa is employed by Grace Lutheran Church on Overland in Culver City. Lisa and her family have lived in Culver City for over 20 years and her children have all gone to Culver City High School.

Please consider Lisa Skelley as a Award winner for the Equity and Human Relations Award. I cannot think of anyone more deserving.