

EQUITY AND HUMAN RELATIONS AWARD

NOMINATION FOR LISA SKELLEY

I met Lisa at Grace Diner in 2020. I could see that she made an effort to learn the name of each and every diner in line and remembered those names the next day. This is not an easy thing to do when you have 200 people in line, often impatient and anxious to receive a hot and nutritious meal while learning to stand 6 feet apart. She managed both a fair food distribution while keeping hungry and food insecure people happy. She greeted each diner with grace and dignity and made sure their food and hydration needs were met for the evening.

The supply chain is often unknown, some days there are extra items to hand out and other days the donations are very limited. Lisa is very competent at managing the supply chain and distributing all the donations. Some donations need to be handed out immediately and other donations can be reserved for the next day.

On a hot day I was running 4 miles every 4 hours as a tribute to my dad. The diner was open. Lisa offered me a cup of lemonade on a hot day. She looked after her diners. She makes sure every diner's needs are met.

As there is in any group of people lined up for something they are challenged to provide for themselves, there are some difficult, rude and disrespectful diners. They have no manners; they do not understand that there is not enough of ten different items to give one of everything to everyone in line. Lisa always remains calm and patient; treats everyone with kindness and provides what she is able to based on the food resources she has to distribute.

Lisa always gives everyone a second chance and sometimes more than a second chance. Some diners have been very rude and have verbally attacked her, sometimes on more than one occasion. She does not want to see anyone go hungry and has organized a small group of dedicated male volunteers to deliver meals to diners who wait at the corner.

It takes a small army of volunteers to distribute meals each day; there is a hot meal or more than one meal if a family is involved, deserts, bread items, drinks, pantry items, produce and other staples that are available for distribution. Lisa has assembled a small group of dedicated volunteers who show up each week; hot summer afternoons and cold and wet nights; and all types of weather in between. It says a lot about the devotion of a leader to her project if her volunteers are always there to help her. They are unpaid, they give up their free time during a weekday afternoon and are not always dealing with people who feel they need to be on their best behavior. People can get frustrated waiting in line for a meal that may not be their favorite but Lisa can depend on her volunteers being by her side tomorrow, next week and the week after and each week thereafter. It takes special people to command the level of volunteer support Lisa has assembled.

I recently joined Lisa as a volunteer assisting on the back end with food deliveries and sorting of these deliveries. There is no pre arranged, pre ordered list of food items. It is a random assortment of salads, breads, pastry items, canned goods, vegetables, eggs, cakes, donuts. And not every food item comes every day. Organizing the distribution of soon to spoil food items with those with a longer shelf life is

not easy. Lisa doesn't know what she will receive each day but she efficiently organizes all of the different food products and ensures each diner leaves with at least one hot meal for each member of their family group, a drink and other items to supplement in home meal preparation if available to them. These hot meals are coordinated by Lisa from catering associates, and local restaurants.

Lisa's dedication to Grace diner and the Culver City community has quietly learned the respect of several diners who now pitch in each day to help with the behind the scenes which are necessary to ensure the success of Grace Diner which is now distributing 1000 plus meals per week. Their individual food needs are secondary to ensuring the diner line markers and tables are set up, cold lemonade and hot coffee are made and food deliveries are sorted and organized for efficient distribution to the diners and those seeking support with food. She didn't need to ask them for help. They recognize the commitment to and quality of the community service provided by Lisa to a need within the Culver City community and are pleased to have the opportunity to assist a devoted individual with her community service. Grace Diner is more than a community service project to Lisa and Culver City should recognize the service she provides.