

Soup Kitchen Is Set Up Like A Restaurant So Homeless Can Dine With Dignity by Elyse Wanshel

One organization has souped up the traditional soup kitchen.

Kansas City Community Kitchen in Kansas City, Missouri, serves food restaurant-style to homeless people, a process which includes greeters, waiters and a side of respect.

"They're treating me good, like they don't know I'm homeless." YES.
#KCKK #NotJustASoupKitchen
— Episcopal Community (@ECS_KC) February 11, 2016

"We are trying to flip the photo of what a soup kitchen looks like," Mandy Caruso-Yahne, director of community engagement at Episcopal Community Services, which runs the kitchen, told Upworthy.

The Kansas City Community Kitchen has been serving the community for 30 years, according to its website, but on Feb. 5, it re-opened with its new restaurant-style initiative that allows the homeless to "dine with dignity."

Each weekday between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m., volunteer wait staff serve high-quality lunches to the homeless, according to a press release. Individuals are greeted at the door by a host who seats them at a table with a menu. A waiter then asks them what they'd like to eat and a freshly made meal is delivered to them.

"It's different," Brian Oglesby, a homeless man who dined at Kansas City Community Kitchen told The Kansas City Star. "They're treating me good, like they don't know I'm homeless."

The menu was created by executive chef Michael Curry, the owner of the Kansas City restaurant, Lil' Bubba, who once lived in poverty and ate at soup kitchens himself.

Curry cooks a healthy and varied menu that incorporates fresh foods and suggestions made by diners.

"Last week we had guests asking us when we were going to do some barbecue," he said in the press release. "So when we prepared our chicken a couple of days later, we decided to make it into pulled chicken sandwiches with our house-made sauce that doesn't have as much sugar and salt."

Serving the homeless isn't all this organization is cooking up.

Volunteers at the kitchen can also participate in the Culinary Cornerstones Training

Program, a 12-week class that teaches the under- and unemployed cooking and financial skills. It also helps students get apprenticeships at other local restaurant.

“We want to be the place that Kansas City restaurants call when they need good help in their kitchens,” Curry said. “Everyone has a right to be nourished and sustained, and we’ll do that with both food and learning.”

As for other volunteers, like Kenneth Cabean, who greets people at the door, it’s about serving up a heaping helping of soul.

“[The homeless] are used to standing in line for food, for a bed — they stand in line to get in the door,” he told The Kansas City Star. “See them smile today? This can change a man’s heart.”

H/T Upworthy