

The time of your life - *the importance of getting involved* – the time to give back.

TIME TO GIVE BACK

The concept of sustainability is sometimes mistakenly equated with an exclusive focus on the environment. Think again! Across the country, sustainable initiatives emerge that help those that are less fortunate and in need and provide underprivileged or low income people the opportunity to prepare themselves for entry level positions in the food service industry. Let's think about professionals being involved in our industry as a little food for thought.

In our view effective and sustainable volunteering are initiatives which are grassroots by nature. There is no right or wrong way to get involved in an industry that has provided us with an income for so many years. Have you ever thought about the many years you and your colleges have been in the industry we love so dearly? How many decades of combined experience do we have together? One of the major challenges is that we are not aware of each others talents and the challenges we face in trying to help newcomers to our industry.

SO WHAT DOES IT TAKE?

Investing in your community is a great way to give back to those who have helped support your business, school or organization. It is important for us to be effective ambassadors for our craft. It is not only about keeping our craft alive, but also awakening the passion for our trade in the younger generation. We really enjoy the intangible benefit of giving. Giving back to the community provides a pleasant feeling of connectedness and the satisfaction of at least trying to make the world a better place. You may be surprised at the benefits you reap!

TIME FOR COMMITMENT

The knowledge we have gained over our working lifetime has every potential to become the new milestone in an effort to advance young and interested people in our industry. Scholarships are a great way to give, but scholarships may not be feasible or sustainable for an individual! The involvement of you or your business in the community should go beyond giving a check to a good cause. Instead, ask yourself, "What can I do that's unique?" Maybe a baker could give bread to a charity dinner? A great suggestion, but is this idea sustainable? Volunteering time or serving on an industry advisory board is a great way to become involved. If you have a telephone, e-mail, computer and fax, you can help where needed, not only locally, but maybe nationally or even world wide. Think big and it might have a much broader impact and may last a lifetime.

Another way to give back in a sustainable manner is to draw on your years of experience and teach others. Many hunger relief organizations have culinary programs directed at individuals who may have had a hard life but are intent on learning a skill and working in our industry. Could you spare a few hours, a week or a month to share some of your work or life experiences? The simple act of giving of your expertise just may spark an interest in a child's or student's life and inspire them to one day go into our profession. Volunteerism also sets a good example for our own children in addition to being helpful to the community. Many of us grew up having a family member involved in charitable organizations and encouraging us to get involved as well. Having this type of role model in life has helped us to find joy in what it means to volunteer and to give back to those who are underserved.

Recently Klaus Tenbergen founded the "The Read and Eat Academy". This project gives University students the opportunity to be involved in a Service Learning Project, where learned knowledge can be applied into a realistic educational experience. Students have the opportunity to help their own Hispanic and Hmong communities. Student volunteers are making use of California State University, Fresno campus' dining services surplus food to prepare nutritional meals catered to community members in need, while teaching basic English language skills.

TRY IT – YOU'LL LIKE IT

Growing our industry involves careful planning, hard work, and a nurturing spirit. Let's help to weather the storm during difficult times, and to plant the seed of sustainable involvement for future harvest. Can you help with programs or a service that provides the tools that organizations need to cultivate effectiveness, so we can reap the full benefit of our quality shared knowledge?

QUESTIONS WORTH ASKING

Why me?

What do I know that other people do not know?

Can I spare a few hours, a week or a month?

How do I get involved?

How can I help?

Do I need to live in the area where my expertise could be used?

Can I use technology to help? (Telephone, e-mail etc.)

WHY BOTHER?

Organizations like: "Bakersassist" <http://www.bakersassist.nl/> - "The Bread Project" <http://www.breadproject.org/> - "Project Bread" <http://www.projectbread.org/> already do a great job in helping people across the globe. Would you like to help as well?

HOW TO GET STARTED

Below are examples of community based and world relief organizations. Identify some in the area where you would like to have an impact whether it is locally or globally. You can use from the list or add to it. When you add to it share your list with others so you can broaden the impact of your involvement.

CONCLUSION

No one size fits all. Weigh the options carefully and examine where you will have the most impact, so the end result will speak for itself. And don't feel you need to micro manage everything you do. Always remember: Although our commitment is extremely important, our first responsibility belongs to our family, employer and customers, students or constituents. But if you get their support as well, the impact you will make will be enormous. Now think about how YOU want to get involved!

Please let us know what you will do or what you have done in the past. If you want to help and need a project contact us as well. If you are a not-for-profit organization in need of additional expertise, we would like to hear from you as well. The Retail Bakers of America will publish your request or your project in upcoming issues of RBA's Bakers Rack magazine. And did you know that the RBA Board of Directors approved the addition of at least 10 mentoring hours to each certification level. What a great opportunity to get involved.

You can email Klaus Tenbergen at ktenbergen@csufresno.edu or Susan Nicolais at snicolais@rbanet.com.

Listed below are just a few **Hunger Relief Organizations:**

1. **America's Second Harvest**
U.S. hunger-relief organization that distributes food to millions of hungry Americans through a network of food banks and food-rescue organizations.
www.secondharvest.org
2. **World Food Programme**
www.wfp.org
3. **Heifer Project International**
Helps impoverished families worldwide become more self-reliant through the gift of livestock and training in their care.
www.heifer.org
4. **Feed the Children**
Nonprofit Christian organization providing food, clothing, educational supplies, medical equipment and other necessities to people who lack these essentials.
www.feedthechildren.org

5. **Food For The Hungry**
Christ-motivated international relief and development organization.
www.fh.org
6. **Food Not Bombs**
Autonomous chapters protest militarism and poverty by serving free vegetarian food to people in need.
www.foodnotbombs.net
7. **Share Our Strength (SOS)**
Anti-hunger organization that mobilizes industries and individuals to contribute their talents to fight hunger.
www.strength.org
8. **Action Against Hunger**
Delivers programs in over 40 countries, specializing in emergency situations of war, conflict, and natural disasters, and longer term assistance to people in distress.
www.aah-usa.org
9. **Mazon**
Dedicated to eliminating hunger and its causes in the United States and around the world; supports anti-hunger efforts without regard to the religion of the sponsoring organization.
www.mazon.org
10. **Food for the Poor**
Religious nonprofit that raises funds and provides direct relief assistance to the poor, usually by purchasing specifically requested materials and distributing them through the churches and charity organizations.
www.foodforthe poor.org
11. **Educational Concerns for Hunger Organization**
Offers information about tropical agriculture, seeds, and training to missionaries, and development workers worldwide.
www.echonet.org
12. **Food for Life Global**
International Hare Krishna vegetarian/vegan food relief organization serving hot meals to the needy.
www.ffl.org
13. **Freedom from Hunger**
Brings innovative and sustainable self-help solutions to the fight against chronic hunger and poverty.
www.freefromhunger.org
14. **Project Bread**
Sponsors of the Walk for Hunger, an annual one-day fundraiser to alleviate local hunger.
www.projectbread.org
15. **Greater Chicago Food Depository**
Distributes food to shelters, soup kitchens and other facilities.
www.chicagosfoodbank.org

16. Capital Area Food Bank

Nonprofit organization which provides food to human service agencies in Central Texas; information on programs, volunteering, donating and participating.

www.austinfoodbank.org

17. Northwest Harvest

Preventing hunger in Washington State since 1967

www.northwestharvest.org

18. North Texas Food Bank

Seeks to eliminate hunger by distributing food through a network of nonprofit organizations.

www.ntxfoodbank.org

19. Food Bank For New York City

Solicits, collects, warehouses, and distributes food to a wide range of community feeding programs.

www.foodbanknyc.org

20. D.C. Central Kitchen

Engages in food recycling, job training for the unemployed, and preparing meals for the hungry.

www.dccentralkitchen.org

Article created in collaboration by:

Klaus Tenbergen, CMB, CEPC, MCFE

Co-chair Retail Baking Industry Foundation of the Retail Bakers of America

Director Culinary® program

Department for Food Science and Nutrition

College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology

California State University, Fresno

Harry J. Crane

Executive Chef and Group Manager

Culinary Resources and Strategy

Kraft Foods Global Inc.

Glenview, Illinois

Anne Marie Vaughan

Post Graduate Student

Department for Food Science and Nutrition

College of Agricultural Sciences and Technology

California State University, Fresno