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Help fight 'food insecurity' in Utah

By Denise Cerreta

Published: Wednesday, Oct. 15, 2008 12:06 a.m. MDT

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I started One World over five years ago because I was guided to do something different in my life. I had no restaurant experience and knew even less about pricing. But I was inspired to not charge for meals. That has turned my life around.

Now, the idea of charging a set price for food or to have a set portion seems as alien to me as the thought that there are people in our own community who can't get enough of it to eat. But for the "food insecure," it is an all too true reality.

The United Nations says food security exists when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The United States Department of Agriculture is even more specific. It defines food security as when all members of a household have safe, readily available and nutritionally adequate food that they don't have to get through emergency food banks, scavenging, stealing or other unacceptable means.

Food insecurity is the opposite of these things. Sadly, many of our own neighbors are living on the wrong side of the definition.

The USDA estimates about 14.5 percent, or one in seven Utah households — about 21,000 — struggle to afford enough food every month. If you don't know what food insecurity might look like, consider the woman who goes to happy hours and takes home a napkin full of wings or veggies, or the child who stays on the playground while his classmates eat lunch. Or the family that visits food banks early Saturday morning or the person digging through the Dumpster.

Story continues below

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Fortunately, our community is constantly responding to these needs. But for one day this month, its response will be in lockstep with the whole world. World Food Day is an effort by the United Nations to raise awareness and understanding and informed year-round action to alleviate hunger. They, like us, realize that many of the world's most persistent problems begin with an empty stomach.

The response from Salt Lake's food community has been overwhelming. That's why, on Thursday nearly two dozen of our eateries will offer a "price your own" special. Most of the participants will offer it in small, medium and large portions. A percentage of the proceeds raised will go to their favorite local food related charity.

This is possible only through the united efforts of Squatters Pub Brewery, Millcreek Coffee Roasters and the Salt Lake City Mayor's Office, which believed me when I said it was possible to start a trend in Salt Lake City that could go around the world. And because they dared to imagine one day a year where everybody could eat.

If we could eliminate food waste from the field to the plate, there would be enough food to meet the needs of everyone in the United States and possibly the world.

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Thank you, Denise, not only for your wonderful food, but for your...

Frank Musgrave | Oct. 15, 2008 at 10:38 a.m.



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