

Street Meals: Leader Packet



THE NIGHT
MINISTRY

**Uptown (Clarendon & Leland),
Sunday, 6:30 PM—8:30 PM, 75 Meals**

Getting Started

So, you've got your date and time on the calendar, you have cross-streets for the bus stop, and the number of meals to serve. Now, you're calling up the people in your group, wondering what food you should serve, and have a couple questions about rules.

Jumping into meal groups is a lot of work, but it means the world to the folks we serve. **23% of the people being seen at the Health and Outreach Bus report it being their first meal of the day.** No one chooses their necessities: food, water, shelter. Whether someone has to pay rent over buying groceries, or the systems around them have stranded them in the street, they still shouldn't starve.

Since you're covering the food, we'll cover you on the steps to prepare. Take a look at the table of contents to the right. If you're the leader of your meal group, make sure you read the Leader Info thoroughly. If you're a participant, follow the Participant checklist (just as thoroughly).

Finally, if you have any questions prior to your scheduled volunteer shift, please contact David Goodwin, the Congregational and Community Relations Coordinator at The Night Ministry. David can generally be reached Monday through Friday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM at (773) 609-6188 and davidg@thenightministry.org.

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Leader Information and Checklist

Ahead of Time:

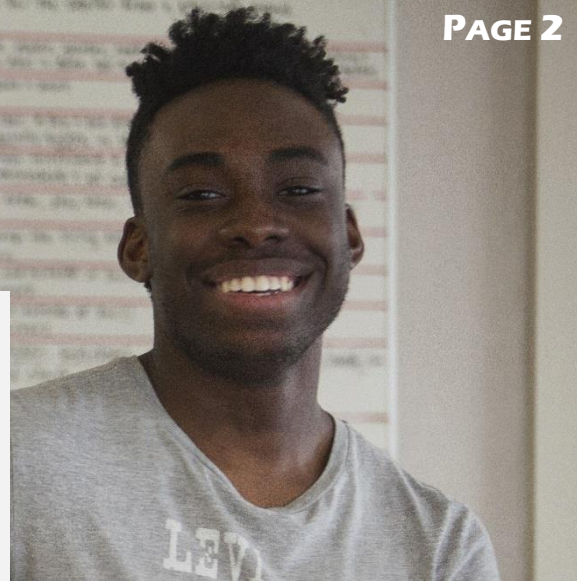
- Recruit 4-6 volunteers to serve the food, ages 14+.
- Shop and prepare for the stated number of meals.
- Provide the enclosed Participant Checklist to each volunteer.
- Send the Volunteer Registration and Confidentiality Form to every volunteer, [found here](#).
- Email David your In-Kind Donation Form, [found here](#).

Night of Service:

- Use the enclosed map point, along with the address and time for your selected stop.
- Travel in your own vehicle(s).
- Prepare a debrief time/location after your volunteer shift.

Other Info/Rules of the Road:

- We distribute condoms and offer HIV/AIDS prevention and testing. You will not be asked to participate, but you must be comfortable with these services present.
- Bus restrooms are restricted to staff and volunteers unless allowed by medical staff. This is due to health and liability concerns.
- Please refrain from offering monetary donations and personal information (beyond your first name and organization) to anyone at the bus while volunteering with the Night Ministry.
- Discussions of religion must be initiated and led by bus guests. You may not advocate for your own religious agenda, and should involve bus staff if you feel uncomfortable at any point in a conversation.
- Safety at the bus is everyone's responsibility. Our team leader will make you aware of any developments relevant to your safety. Please follow the Team Leader's directions, and involve them immediately if you feel an unsafe situation is developing.
- We share the environment with our guests. Even though serving food and drinks can be messy, please help staff leave the Bus Service Site cleaner than we found it.



“63% of visitors to our Health Outreach Bus report that relationships they built at the Bus have led to new opportunities.”

Participant Information and Checklist

Ahead of Time:

- Fill out** the [Volunteer Registration & Confidentiality Form](#).
- Review** this Information and Checklist page.

Night of Service:

- Leave your valuables at home. The Night Ministry is not responsible for any misplaced items.
- Dress in a way that's seasonally appropriate to stand outside for up to 2 hours. Check the day's forecast!
- Only take photos of your group, not the people you serve. (This is to protect our clients' confidentiality and rights.)
- Eat before you arrive to serve.
- Please wear food safety gloves while serving food.
- If you're feeling ill, please stay home.

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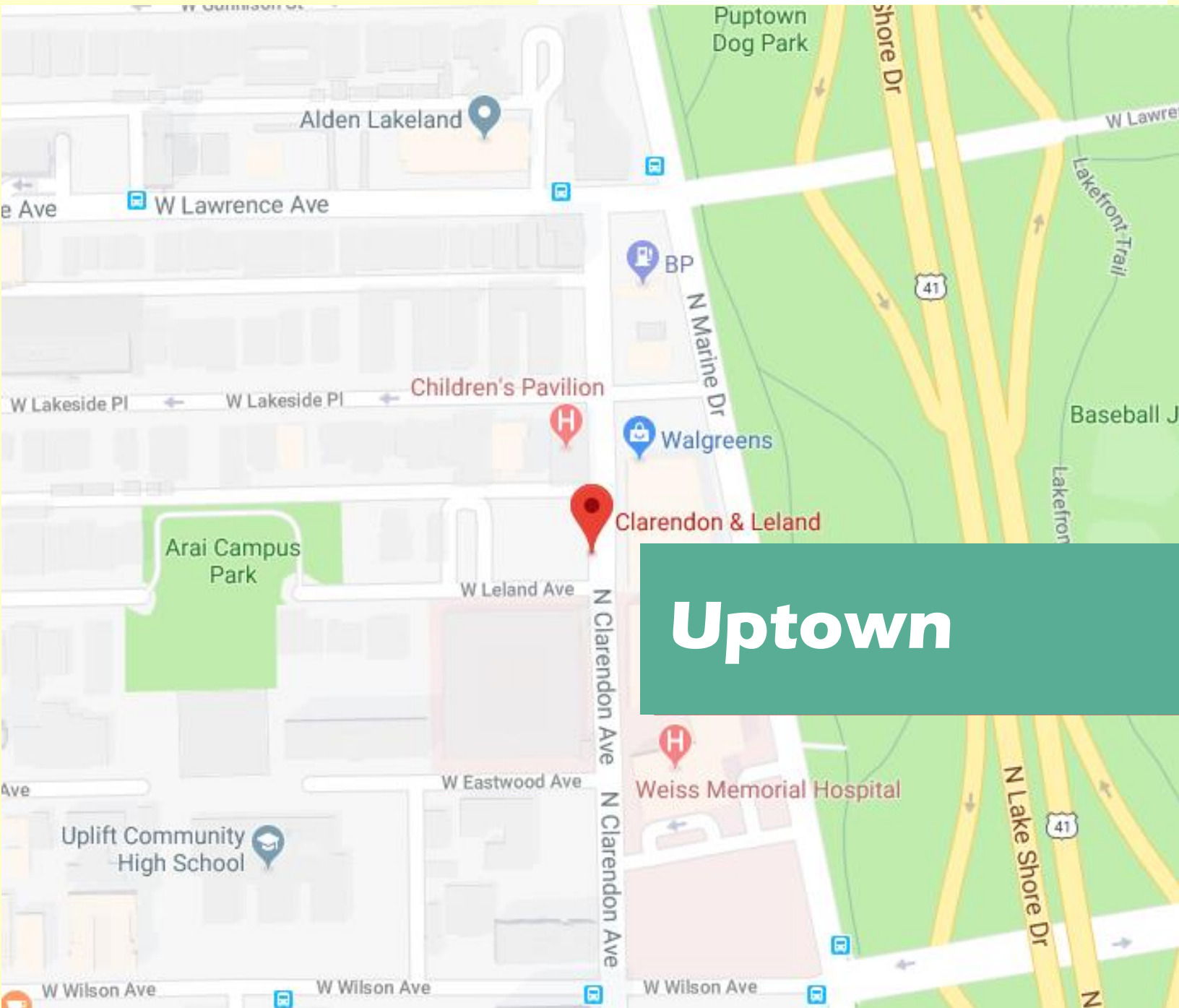


Your Health and Outreach Bus Stop

If you have questions about the stop ahead of time, you can contact David Goodwin, the Congregational and Community Relations Coordinator (davidg@thenightministry.org or (773) 506-6004).

EMERGENCY? RUNNING LATE? LAST MINUTE CANCELLATION?

Please call the bus staff at the phone number provided in your confirmation e-mail. If there is no answer, leave a voicemail with your concern, name, and phone number.



Uptown

[Use this link](#) for directions to the stop. There is plenty of street parking. Check out all of our stops [here!](#)



Street Meal Reflection Questions

Thank you from everyone here at The Night Ministry for taking the time to serve food alongside our Health and Outreach services. It means a lot to us to know we can rely on you to cover that end of the work. It means even more to the people seeking our services to know we are a consistent source of support and nourishment.

The thing is, our work is based on relationships built through trust. That's how we started what we do in 1976, and that's what still rests at the core of our work. To build those relationships, we had to listen without presuming anything on our end. We had to learn what it meant to be homeless, wrestle with what actually causes such a traumatic experience, and allow ourselves to grow and change.


In this work, our clients change *and* we change. That's two-way. That's solidarity. That's the only way we can do this work. So, if you're willing, we'd like to offer some questions to help you reflect on your experience serving with us. Plus, taking some time to process with your group will help you build more meaning out of the event in general.

What we suggest is you find a quiet place, whether on the car ride home, at a café, a congregation fellowship room, or even someone's home. Make some tea, maybe light a candle, get comfy. Then open with an emotional check-in (e.g. "Right now, I feel..."), have different people lead different questions, and close with a final emotional check-in.

Possible Questions

1. What were your expectations going into this experience? (Even if this was your millionth time.)
2. What did you want to get out of it? What did you need to get out of it? Were those different?
3. Is your understanding of homelessness changing? If so, how? If not, why?
4. How did your ideology* and/or theology impact your experience? How was your theology and/or ideology impacted?
5. What story did you hear tonight or what person did you meet that you're still thinking about? Why is that?
6. How would you have experienced the bus if you were approaching it from an encampment under a viaduct, or because you couldn't afford rent *and* food and healthcare?
7. What would have to fail you for homelessness to become your best option? What would you do then?

**ideology*: a system of ideas and ideals that inform your worldview. *Syn.*: *Ethic*



Street Tested Meal Suggestions

Rule #1 on meal suggestions will always be make food you want to eat. When you figure out what falls between that, your budget, and the number of meals needed for your stop, then you know what to bring.

The only caveat we have is that recipes should be mild and basic. Cooking for 75-150 people means cooking for 75-150 different palettes. You can always bring hot sauce and other condiments/additions to have on the side.

Here are some things that have worked in the past:

Main Dishes (at least one of the following):

- ❖ Soup/stew/chili (preferred in winter months – bowls and spoons can be requested)
 - Hearty meat and/or vegetables
 - served with a rice, other grain, or even noodles
- ❖ Baked or fried chicken; sloppy joes or beef hot dogs; lasagna or other pasta dishes; tamales, tacos, or burritos; meatball subs; pulled pork sandwiches; etc.
- ❖ Deli meat and cheese sandwiches

Sides (3-4 of the following)

- ❖ Soft fruit (e.g. bananas, berries, or clementines); fruit cups or applesauce; macaroni & cheese or pasta salad; individual bags of chips, pretzels, or peanut butter or cheddar crackers; homemade lunchables w/ cheese, crackers, and meat slices; individual packages of veggies such as baby carrots or snap peas

Desserts

- ❖ Homemade cookies or other baked goods like brownies, rice crispy treats, etc. (anything that stores and transports well)

Drinks

- ❖ Bottled water, juice, sports drink

Service Items

- ❖ Napkins
- ❖ Brown bags or plastic bags
- ❖ 5-gallon thermoses and ladle for soups, stews, and chili

Food Safety

Please be meticulous in handling, preparing, and transporting perishable items, especially in warm months when food can spoil quickly. Keep perishable items in coolers.

Wipe down work surfaces with soap and water, or spray with cleaner before you begin. Always wash your hands with soap and water for at least 30 seconds before handling food.

Wear food-handling gloves (found by the plastic wrap at the grocery store) to avoid bare-hand contact with food. People with long hair should wear a baseball cap or head covering.

