

## Five Loaves, Two Fish Kitchen Ministries Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

Michelle Overstreet, Executive Director of My House Homeless Teen Resource Center, provided two heart-warming examples about the impact our weekly meals have on her clients. These stories have recently been featured in *The People's Paper* and *The Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman*.

On Friday, November 30th, Mike Gordon was busy preparing weekly meals inside the Five Loaves, Two Fish kitchen when the magnitude 7.2 earthquake struck. The power was out for two hours and a variety of cooking utensils, food and other objects were strewn all over the floor. Mike used the light on his phone to clean up the mess, while communicating with his regular volunteers to stay home and deal with their personal home damage. Mike had slow-cooked the pork from the night before, and managed to prepare the complete meals as planned, using emergency lights and the gas oven. When the regulars from the agencies did not show up to collect the meals, Duane Hanson arrived to deliver all meals to My House and Knik Houses right on schedule. Michelle Overstreet later relayed that she was not expecting the regular meal delivery that day at My House, but was trying to decide how to feed and comfort the more than thirty homeless youth that had showed up immediately after the earthquake. They were in crisis, sitting together in the dark when Duane Hanson arrived with a complete hot meal, including dessert. Michelle emphasized that not only did that meal nourish their hungry bodies, but it also reminded them that they were loved and cared for by their community at a time when that comfort was much needed!

Ms. Overstreet shared a sentimental story about the positive effect Good Shepherd's famous cookies had on one of her clients. She said that a case manager wrote up an anecdote about one of her youth who refused to smile, "just a sad, lost boy."

The boy came to the café one day and saw cookies in a bag that were left over from the previous day. He was offered a chance to try them. He requested to have them heated up in the microwave. The boy sat at the table with warmed up cookies and the case manager asked him if he wanted anything to drink. The boy said, "if I could have a glass of milk, that'd be awesome". He sat there and ate warm cookies and milk and smiled, "Overstreet said as tears welled up in her eyes. "And it was one of the first times the case manager had seen him smiling."

Overstreet called this the "cookies and milk story" and reiterated what the case manager said about the powerful role food plays in "helping people feel loved and cared for." "For him [the boy], that feeling that 'people care about me' and the smile came from that was directly related to cookies and milk – warm cookies and milk," Overstreet said. "I think we underestimate that as a society. We forget that."

These stories are wonderful examples of why our Kitchen Ministry continues to provide meals every week to those in need. Thank you to everyone for your continuing support!

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*Five Loaves Two Fish Kitchen prepares and delivers 200 meals per week to places around the Mat-Su Valley in need of food. We prepare food for My House Homeless Teens Resource Center, Knik House, Family Promise, Next Step and many others.*

*Our goal is to provide food for hungry people.*

