

EVENTS/CAUSES

Four Seasons and Waldorf Astoria team up to feed homeless

November 10, 2015



Waldorf Astoria, New York

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Four Seasons Hotel New York and Waldorf Astoria New York are working together to extend holiday cheer to the underprivileged.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Fare Share Friday, organized by Crossroads Community Services, will take place the day after Thanksgiving. Holidays are thought of as cheerful times spent with family, but countless homeless, orphaned or otherwise disadvantaged people are too often neglected in the celebration.

"We take great pride in the New York City community that surrounds us - we have been part of this midtown Manhattan neighborhood since 1931," said David Garcelon, director of culinary at **Waldorf Astoria** New York. "We know hunger and homelessness unfortunately exists in our community and we want to do our part to help those in need and hopefully find a solution we enjoy doing our part.

"It is not just myself as executive chef who is involved an array of other hotel employees are willingly donating their time for this cause, including other chefs, pastry chef, banquet cooks, dishwashers, director of banquets, catering manager, and even our chief concierge, who is part of the esteemed Clefs d'Or all of these people are volunteering and are proud to do so."

Happy Thanksgiving

Soup kitchen patrons, volunteers and supporters will all sit down together to enjoy a meal at 4 p.m. or at 7 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 27 at St. Bartholomew's Church on Park Avenue. Although the meal is for the needy and volunteers, donation tickets can be purchased for \$100, with proceeds going to soup kitchens, food pantries and homeless shelters.

Chef David Garcelon of The Waldorf Astoria, chef Jacques Sorci of The Lotte New York Palace and executive chef John Johnson of the Four Seasons New York will prepare the meal. Both Mr. Garcelon and Mr. Sorci were involved in last year's event.



Fare Share Friday promotional photo

The event's Web site will include interviews with the chefs in the weeks leading up to the event.

"Working with the three different hotel kitchens is much like a symphony, every musician knows the note they need to play and when to play it at the exact instant they need to," Mr. Garcelon says in his statement.

Hotels generally offer special dinners and other events on Thanksgiving for patrons, but reaching out to a community in need to provide them with the same great dining experience is going the extra mile. While those who stay at a Four Seasons or Waldorf Astoria can afford high-end meals, extending that luxury to those who cannot signifies a genuine commitment to a community in need.



Entrance of Four Seasons New York

Corporate social responsibility is especially important in the hospitality industry, and many brands engage in volunteer efforts and philanthropy throughout the year. However, it is easy to forget during the sprightly holiday season that for some it means unfavorable temperatures.

The chefs work for competing hotels, so the partnership symbolizes a belief that larger issues are more important than individual businesses.

"It is no secret the competition between luxury hotels in New York is real and we are all trying to outdo each other to win the loyalty of our discerning guests," Mr. Garcelon said. "However, we also all understand the greater good in putting that aside and engaging together to make a difference which can be incredibly rewarding.

"The chef community is also involved in friendly competition yet we always come together to help and support each other," he said. "Fare Share Friday is an endeavor all of us (the teams at the Waldorf Astoria New York, Lotte New York Palace and Four Seasons) are truly excited to be involved with together."

Charitable endeavors

The proximity of charity and hospitality has become even more apparent in recent months.

Traveling is an increasingly popular way for people to give back, and hotel brands must stay on top of the trend to maintain their status as the best in the business.

A recent study by Tours.com found that an astonishing 55 percent of America-based travelers partook in volunteer work during a vacation within the past two years, with almost three quarters calling their charitable donations or

philanthropic endeavors "important," "very important" or "extremely important."

As "voluntourism" becomes increasingly common, brands must show that they care equally and assist travelers in partaking in volunteer work or gifting to maintain status and image ([see story](#)).

Despite the efforts of hotels to work with patrons in volunteer initiatives, participation in Fare Share Friday shows that charity and philanthropy do not need to be done with potential customers in mind.

Corporate social responsibility may be about relationship building rather than transactions, but that makes it more important for brands, not less, according to Christie's executive at Luxury Interactive Europe 2015 in London Oct. 27.

The speaker offered a number of tips for brands looking to improve or get started on CSR, offering a number of Christie's stories as support. In addition to quality craftsmanship and great service, being a luxury brand means using a highly visible and admired position to fulfill moral and ethical responsibilities ([see story](#)).

"Our team really enjoys being able to extend doing what we do best for people in this community who are less fortunate," Mr. Garcelon said. "It is quite incredible seeing how much they enjoy being treated like they are truly part of the community and can enjoy a great meal served to them they are truly grateful and our team is happy to be part of that."

Final Take

Forrest Cardamenis, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.