



L.A. KITCHEN

revealing the power of food

L.A. Kitchen believes that neither food nor people should ever go to waste. By reclaiming healthy, local food that would otherwise be discarded, training men and women who are unemployed for jobs, and providing healthy meals to fellow citizens, L.A. Kitchen empowers, nourishes, and engages the community.



CULINARY JOB TRAINING

Approximately 1,500 foster youth age out of the Los Angeles County child welfare system each year. At the end of 2012, California had more than 130,000 prison inmates. Working with men and women too often viewed as “part of the problem”, L.A. Kitchen’s intergenerational culinary job-training program empowers emancipated foster youth and older adults transitioning out of incarceration to thrive in careers in the food service industry. L.A. Kitchen incorporates culinary arts, advocacy, food safety, nutrition education, life skills, and professional development into a 15-week vocational program. Consulting with chefs and experts across the country, and building on the groundwork laid by DC Central Kitchen, L.A. Kitchen developed and published its own culinary job training and life skills curriculum in 2014. Trainees also receive ServSafe food handler certification, and intern with culinary professionals, gaining the skills they need to transform their careers and communities.

A pilot of L.A. Kitchen’s programs are currently underway at St. Vincent’s Meals on Wheels (STVMOW) while its permanent home is under construction. In exchange for use of STVMOW’s kitchen, L.A. Kitchen provides STVMOW with healthy, freshly chopped produce for use in the 4,000+ meals they deliver each day, saving an estimated \$50,000 over the course of the pilot. This partnership has allowed L.A. Kitchen to further hone the training program.

Once the program moves into its new home in Lincoln Heights, L.A. Kitchen’s goal is to graduate 100 trainees annually, who will collectively earn over \$2 million in salaries, and contribute over \$200,000 in payroll taxes.



FOOD RECOVERY

Everyday in America, an estimated 40% of the food we produce is discarded; 50% of that waste is nutritious fruits and vegetables. In 2015, L.A. Kitchen will move into a new 20,000 sq ft kitchen facility where we will work directly with farmers and wholesale companies

to collect fruits and vegetables that are cosmetically unsalable,. All donations and purchases will be gathered at L.A. Kitchen's food processing hub, where staff and volunteers will use it to make healthy meals, snacks, and food products for social services agencies across Los Angeles, or process and freeze it for distribution at a later date. During the first year of operating in this new facility, L.A. Kitchen expects to reclaim 1,000,000 pounds of produce.



VOLUNTEERS

L.A. Kitchen recruits Angelenos to help transform raw fruits and vegetables into nutritious meals and snacks. Currently, 22% of Los Angeles residents volunteer, performing 295.7 million hours of service each year. In 2014, L.A. Kitchen volunteers helped prepare fresh produce for St. Vincent Meals on Wheels, donating more than 1,000 hours to the program. L.A. Kitchen volunteers reflect a wide cross section of our community, and we seek to provide intergenerational volunteer opportunities that engage both older adults and young people. Volunteers also work side-by-side with job trainees and graduates, breaking down barriers that divide communities. L.A. Kitchen aims to recruit 10,000 volunteers in its first full year of operation with its new facility.



FOOD DISTRIBUTION

L.A. Kitchen will distribute free, nutritionally-dense meals, snacks and food products to social service agencies that serve Los Angeles' most vulnerable populations, with a special focus on older adults. The aging of the 70+ million Baby Boomers will place immense economic strain on every community, and the number of men and women over 65 in Los Angeles will double over the next 15 years. This generation is more health conscious than previous generations, and will demand better food options. Many of them are expected to suffer from chronic conditions that could be reversed or prevented by a healthy lifestyle. At the same time, few of these older adults will be financially secure in their later years, and they will rely on assistance programs for support.

L.A. Kitchen will work with nutritional experts to produce predominantly plant-based products tailored to state and local regulations, while offering new and exciting approaches to feeding and empowering people. L.A. Kitchen's food products will also be made available to after-school programs, drug treatment centers, and programs that empower the homeless, with the goal of saving them millions of dollars that can be used to empower and uplift their clients. L.A. Kitchen's goal is to produce 990,000 meals, snacks, and wholesale products within its first full year of operating in its new facility.



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SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Rate the population of older adults in L.A. County will grow by 2030

2x

Strong Food's business plan is to be a major provider of healthy meals to this population.

Portion of older adults who will be Hispanic, Asian, or African American in L.A. County by 2030.

2/3

Current contractors do not offer menus that celebrate this diversity. Strong Food will.

Average price for a contracted senior meal in Los Angeles.

\$3.61

We will offer a higher quality, locally sourced, nutritious meal for less.

Our starting wage for all food service and production employees

\$13/hr.

Strong Food will pay a living wage, benefits, and provide growth opportunities.

L.A. Kitchen is developing a social enterprise business, Strong Food, that will contract with city agencies, food service businesses, and nonprofit organizations to prepare locally sourced, ethnically diverse meals and food products for older adults. Strong Food will have the capacity and infrastructure to hire graduates of L.A. Kitchen's culinary job training program to ensure they won't slip back into the cycle of poverty, and sustainably bring revenue back into L.A. Kitchen's programs.

Strong Food will offer a new model of food for the aging, focusing on healthy, plant-based meals served in multi-compartment bento-boxes. We will offer a wide variety of options that will anticipate significant demographic shifts over the next two decades. We will be competitive with, and often more affordable than, the current price the city pays.

L.A. Kitchen has been testing the concept through a small congregate meal contract with Affordable Living for the Aging Senior Housing, and hired its first alumni, Theresa Farthing, to prepare the meals. Confirmed partners and/or potential clients include St. Vincent Meals on Wheels, St. Barnabas Senior Services, the Alliance for Children's Rights, St. Joseph Center, Dress for Success Worldwide – West, W.I.N.T.E.R Youth Build Program, Hunger Action Los Angeles, Public Council, California Food Policy Advocates, Office of the Federal Public Defender, RootDown LA and Children's Bureau.

A balanced diet is when all people have equal access to healthy food.

a social
enterprise
of





KEY PARTNERS

AARP Foundation

L.A. Kitchen received a visionary \$1 million start-up grant from the AARP Foundation. This grant allowed L.A. Kitchen to form a founding board and hire the staff necessary to begin developing programs and partnerships to realize its ambitious plans. The aging of the 70+ million Baby Boomers will place immense economic strain on every community, and AARP challenged L.A. Kitchen to innovate new models to meet the need for healthy, affordable food for older adults.

St. Vincent Meals on Wheels

A pilot of L.A. Kitchen's programs is currently underway at St. Vincent's Meals on Wheels (STVMOW) while its permanent home is under construction. In exchange for use of STVMOW's kitchen, L.A. Kitchen provides STVMOW with healthy, freshly chopped produce for use in the 4,000+ meals they deliver each day, saving an estimated \$50,000 over the course of the pilot. This partnership has allowed L.A. Kitchen to further hone its culinary job training program, which graduated its second pilot class in January 2015.

L.A. Prep

L.A. Kitchen anticipates moving into its new food processing facility in April 2015. L.A. Kitchen will be the lead tenant of L.A. Prep, a new business incubator that will make wholesale production kitchens available for rent to up-and-coming food entrepreneurs. Internship and employment opportunities within L.A. Prep's network of food makers will be available to L.A. Kitchen graduates. L.A. Kitchen will source fresh produce for L.A. Prep's start-ups, generating income for L.A. Kitchen's programs.

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EMPOWER L.A. PARTNERS



TRAINING PARTNERS

Ameriprise Financial Literacy
Children's Bureau
Gourmandise School of Sweets and Savories
Heirloom LA
InsideOut Writers Writing Circle
LIFT LA
Matthew Kenney Cuisine/M.A.K.E. Santa Monica
MEND Poverty
Red Bread
Seafood for the Future: Aquarium of the Pacific
The Healing Agency
The Hive
USC School of Economics
Violence Research Foundation
Women in Local Food Scene

INTERNSHIP SITES

Bazaar by José Andrés
Craft Los Angeles
Eveleigh
Groundwork Coffee Company
Heirloom LA
M.A.K.E. Santa Monica
MEND Poverty
Post & Beam
Proof Bakery
Starbucks
St. Vincent Meals on Wheels

REFERRING AGENCIES

Angel's Nest TLP
Children's Bureau
Conviction and Sentence Alternatives (CASA)
Program of Central California
Downtown Women's Center
Dream Center
Hillsides Youth Moving On
InsideOut Writers
L.A. County Department of Children & Family
Services & Department of Probation: Youth
Development Services Division
LIFT LA
New Opportunities Charter School
Peace4Kids
Skid Row Housing Trust
Southern California Foster Family & Adoption
Agency: Foster Alumni Co-Mentoring Experience
The Alliance for Children's Rights
The Right Way Foundation
The Supervision to Aid Reentry (STAR) Program
The Teen Project



Neither food nor people should ever go to waste. We recognize the potential of the community's existing resources and are dedicated to revealing their power to nourish and uplift.

All people have potential, and every person has a role in strengthening the community. We will engage all volunteers, staff, and students in meaningful, impactful work.

Hunger isn't about food. We will work to address the root causes of poverty, employing a variety of dynamic approaches to nourish the community.

Programs should empower individuals and inspire independence. We will only partner with organizations that share these values, providing them with nutritious meals to help achieve their mission, strengthen their clients, and uplift the community.

Our impact will not be measured in pounds moved or meals served. We will employ nuanced metrics to provoke deeper dialogue about food, hunger and poverty.

Wealth derived from the community should be reinvested locally. We use our resources to strengthen the local economy and invest in the future of our employees.

We will not apply shallow overhead practices. We will challenge status quo, providing all employees a living wage and opportunities to invest in their future retirement.

Investments should be made in both the present and the future. We will promote intergenerational programming that empowers all individuals, young and old alike.

Action should be paired with advocacy. We will use our resources to educate and promote policy ideas that elevate issues and mitigate future need.

Transparency is an essential part of improving programs. We will operate and make decisions in full view of the community we serve.

Smart solutions should be shared. We will be open-source, sharing our model and welcoming all visitors.

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December 15, 2014

Founder of DC Central Kitchen Has New City to Feed: Los Angeles



Jenny Song Galante/Courtesy of L.A. Kitchen

L.A. Kitchen is part nonprofit, part social business, with a multipronged, multigenerational mission to reduce food waste and unemployment while combating hunger and isolation among older adults.

By Megan O'Neil

Los Angeles

An abandoned toilet-seat factory in a gritty, freeway-spliced neighborhood might not seem like the ideal stage for a bold Los Angeles debut.

But that is exactly where Robert Egger could be found on a recent morning, inspecting the renovation of a two-level, 64,000-square-foot space, one-third of which will soon house his latest venture: *L.A. Kitchen*. It is part nonprofit, part social business, with a multipronged, multigenerational mission to reduce food waste and unemployment while combating hunger and isolation among older adults.

"Old people aren't on the map," said Mr. Egger, adding that there is not a city or nonprofit in the country prepared for the demographic tsunami of aging baby boomers.

The name of the venture, and its philosophy, might sound familiar. In 1989, Mr. Egger founded *DC Central Kitchen*, one of the first organizations to take excess food from restaurants and hotels to create meals for the hungry. The success of the model, along with several complementary endeavors and social enterprises that followed, made Mr. Egger a celebrity in Washington and beyond.

Read the rest at <http://philanthropy.com/article/Founder-of-DC-Central-Kitchen/150773>

Second Chances and Culinary Dreams at the L.A. Kitchen

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READ TRANSCRIPT

In 1989, activist and nonprofit leader Robert Egger founded the D.C. Central Kitchen, an organization that has prepared approximately 27 million meals for the needy. Now, he's brought his philosophy and inspiration from the D.C. Central Kitchen to Los Angeles to help start a fresh new social enterprise movement.

Quick Links

[Food: Activist Robert Egger's SoCal Return](#)

The L.A. Kitchen is all about giving second chances and incorporating an effective business model that benefits the larger community. Earlier this year, it launched a program that creates opportunities for marginalized men and women who have come out of foster care and prisons.

A new kind of charity, it prides itself as a dynamic social enterprise that not only puts jobs back into the economy, but also empowers the community through collaborative efforts, culinary training, and job placement to eliminate the school-to-prison pipeline.

"We're trying to say, 'look, there's this new model of charity out there that is much more cost-effective, much more dynamic, much more empowering,'" said Egger.

The program equips students with not just culinary skills, but life skills as well. Students learn how to prepare healthy, fresh meals, which in turn are delivered to the elderly and the homeless -- a simple formula that benefits people from different occupations and all walks of life.

Egger believes the goal is to empower the local community, reduce the amount of food that is typically wasted, and prepare fresh and warm meals to the elderly. Reducing the pipeline helps benefit taxpayers, farmers, and recipients of meals. This, in turn, also helps reduce the overcrowding of jails through an economic recovery program. It's a win-win situation that works well in the business world.

"I'm not here to do charity, I'm here to rock L.A. We want to create jobs, opportunity, and really give the city a tremendous value," said Egger.

In this segment of "SoCal Connected," reporter Derrick Shore finds out what's cooking at the L.A. Kitchen. Shore interviews Robert Egger, and a few graduates who believe that they have been given a second chance to make their culinary dreams come true.