

We're Moving On Up

Bahamas Feeding Network Marks Opening of New Headquarters



Executives and volunteers of the Bahamas Feeding Network cut the ribbon at its new headquarters at #42 Fox Hill Road. Pictured in the front row are Recina Ferguson-Scully, Distribution & Volunteer Coordinator; Sheila Knowles, BFN's neighbour; Shayne Davis, Director; Celeste Lockhart, BFN's neighbour; Lester Ferguson, Executive Director and Michelle Shepherd, Office Administrator.

Nearly 10 years and more than one million meals after it opened in a cottage loaned by a supporting family in April 2013, the Bahamas Feeding Network celebrated moving into a permanent home in Fox Hill, Nassau.

"We are literally steps away from where this all began with volunteers cooking hot meals first for the community of Fox Hill and later for a dozen churches to share with their congregations," said Executive Director Lester Ferguson.

"As the number of organizations and churches which came to collect food grew, so did the camaraderie. Although conditions were crowded, everyone pitched in. The little cottage that had been given to us to use by the Davis Family, just seemed to expand till it was bursting at the seams with grills outside and volunteers forming human assembly lines."

According to BFN Director Shayne Davis, the new home of the fight against hunger will increase efficiency of operations and enable the Feeding Network to increase its output.

"We've seen over those nine years an almost exponential growth and demand for this service. We started just two doors north of here and we're so very pleased that now we have a slightly larger facility where we can consolidate everyone under one roof and that allows us to hopefully be a little more efficient in what we do. When the Feeding Network was created it was created with two principle purposes: firstly, to be laser focus on the delivery of food and nutrition to those people who were desperately in need of it and secondly, to consolidate the effort of fundraising and to get resources into the hands of the organizations that are actually in the forefront in one way or the other, either in terms of direct financial assistance or through the delivery of supplies to them so that they can expand their reach."

Others present for the ceremony included representatives from Caribbean Bottling Ltd., Sysco Bahamas Food Services, Milo Butler & Sons, Jamaica Bahamas Imports, Rubie's Kitchen, The Salvation Army, Hands of Hope Ministries and Kingdom Outreach Ministries.

The new facility is located a few doors south of the Fox Hill Police Station on Fox Hill Road in the heart of the historic district.



And the Award Goes To

During its grand opening ceremony, executives of the Bahamas Feeding Network used the occasion to say a special thank you to a number of long-time partners for their donation of in-kind services. Plaques were presented to Bahamas Waste, Cay Focus Photography, Diane Phillips & Associates, The Davis Family and Bahamas Local.

"I want to publicly thank all of the volunteers and partners that we have had in this journey that have assisted us in being able to deliver the services that we offer," said Shayne Davis, who himself surprisingly accepted a token of appreciation on behalf of the Davis Family. "Each one of you has played a critical role in helping this organization grow."



Pictured l-r: Shayne Davis, the Davis Family; Jason McDowall, Bahamas Local; Francisco DeCardenas, Bahamas Waste, Alexavia Dorsett, Diane Phillips & Associates; Mark Gibson for Cay Focus Photography and Lester Ferguson, Executive Director, Bahamas Feeding Network.

Lester Ferguson Named New Executive Director

The Bahamas Feeding Network announced a change in leadership in the way of Lester Ferguson as Executive Director. Mr. Ferguson is one of founding directors of the non-profit organization and he replaces Philip Smith, who served in that post since the organization was formed in 2013.

Announcement of the change came from BFN Chairman Felix Stubbs.

"The Bahamas Feeding Network thanks Philip Smith for his years of dedication to the eradication of hunger in our Bahamas," said Mr. Stubbs. "Philip's passion and his tireless energy, compassion and fund-raising have truly made him the face in the fight against hunger for nearly a decade and we are pleased that he will remain on the board. We wish him every success and we welcome Lester Ferguson, a man whose purpose-driven life has impacted and uplifted countless numbers of men, women and children whose lives are better today because of his encouragement."

Mr. Ferguson was the first Bahamian divisional commander of The Salvation Army in The Bahamas, leading that ministry organization for ten years. Following that post, he was the Executive Secretary of the National Commission for Persons with Disability. Since 2017 Mr. Ferguson has been the Pastor of the Grant's Town Wesley Methodist Church.



Mr. Ferguson praised his predecessor and said he is excited to tackle the work ahead.

"I am honoured to help continue the mission of the Bahamas Feeding Network," said Ferguson. "One of the objectives of the Network is to be a resource for feeding centres across Nassau, and I look forward to further strengthening all of our partnerships to help hungry families in our nation."

Mario Carey Appointed to Board

The Bahamas Feeding Network announced the appointment of prominent businessman and real estate pioneer Mario Carey to its board of directors.

"We are pleased to announce the appointment of Mario Carey to the board," said BFN Chairman Felix Stubbs. "Mario is not only an astute businessperson who is increasingly dedicating his energy and resources to social entrepreneurship, he is someone who demonstrated he understands the reality of hunger in challenging times."

Along with partners, Paolo Garzaroli and the team at Graycliff, Carey created an initiative called Pasta Fridays, closing his office and recruiting his real estate firm to prepare and distribute thousands of boxed hot meals every Friday for months during the height of COVID-related unemployment.

"In a career that spanned four decades in real estate, I was very fortunate to have done well, but I was also exposed to



the differences between those who have plenty and those who have too little,” said Carey. “More and more, I have wanted to find ways to help ease that gap whether through education and training for upward mobility and better opportunities or, when necessary, through assistance. I have been impressed by the work of the Bahamas Feeding Network since the day it was founded by Frank Crothers and I am honoured to serve on the board.”

Congratulations to H.E. Hermanns

Chairman Stubbs wishes to acknowledge and thank Her Excellency Patricia Hermanns for her invaluable contribution as a Board member. H. E. Hermanns now serves as Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Geneva. He congratulates H. E. Hermanns, who is now an Honorary Board Member of the Bahamas Feeding Network.

BFN Distribution Snapshot

(January to April 2022)

Number of family-sized food parcels provided: **5,573 parcels**

Number of feeding centres, soup kitchens, church/community pantries served: **93**

Number of persons feeding programmes serve collectively: **18,292 persons**

Total impact (# of meals): **256,088 meals**



A Reminder of Our Impact

Ms. Ann McGregor shared what it meant to be on the receiving end of food assistance from the Network.

“To some it may just be a programme, but for persons like myself and others out there that do not have help, this is help, hope, love and appreciation. You’ll come here as a stranger but with the love and support that you receive, you leave feeling like a friend. Thank you and congratulations to the entire team, especially to the hardworking and dedicated workers. We just stand on the line but we don’t know the hard work that goes behind it. On behalf of myself and other persons who cannot speak for themselves, we thank you and all the persons that donate and we want you to continue to donate because there are a lot of persons out there hurting. Every little bit counts, no matter how small it may be.”



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TOGETHER WE CAN
WIPE IT OUT!**