

# Foot Notes

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821 CONSECUTIVE WEEKS OF SERVICE

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## IN THE SPIRIT OF GIVING



**Christian Navarro, FOF Board Member**

If anyone understands the feeling of being homeless, it is local business-owner Christian Navarro. For the last two years, he has been supporting Food on Foot (FOF) as a Club Member and recently became our newest member on the Board of Directors.

Christian is a partner and co-owner of Wally's Wine and Spirits located in Westwood, CA. Wally's is one of the largest retail wine merchants in the United States and is responsible for importing, selling and making wine both locally and worldwide. Christian's business is so successful that he has been known to hand deliver the best wine and spirits to the top people on the planet. A connoisseur of food, wine, and culture, Christian explains, "I host events at hotels and museums in Europe and Asia to name a few. It is my passion to provide others with my knowledge and what's happening in Western wine, food and culture."

In 2009, Christian began his involvement with FOF as a volunteer on Thanksgiving Day. He witnessed many Work for Food crewmembers, firsthand, walking through the "chicken line" listening to stories of hardship and enjoying the interaction with the homeless individuals he might not have met otherwise. After that day, Christian wanted to become more involved with the organization. He states, "I had the opportunity to talk to some of the homeless

and hear their challenging stories. It made me want to do more. I discovered it was extremely rewarding to volunteer, and I was highly impressed that FOF was different--it wasn't just a typical serving. I really enjoyed myself and the hands-on interaction."

Originally from Mexico City, Mexico, Christian was raised in Palm Springs and moved to Los Angeles at the age of 19 to become an artist. He wanted to be a painter like his idol, Henri Matisse, but the universe had a bigger plan for him. It was not going to be his hands, but his palette that would be the key to his successful business. Christian, however, was not always so lucky. His father passed away when he was 4 years old and was raised by a single mother. For an extended period, he was cold, hungry and lonely. He explains, "FOF means so much to me because it was exactly what I had needed when I was young. The tough love model is something I wish I had when I was growing up. Food on Foot only helps the ones that want to be helped and guides them back to becoming self-sufficient individuals."

Christian credits his boss for his abundant success in the wine industry. When he was only 19 years old, Christian worked at a local wine store in West LA sweeping the floors and helping the owner clean up. It was then that he developed a passion for wine tasting. Shortly thereafter, Christian took a chance with Wally's. When asked what drives him to keep moving forward, he answers, "It's about being the best you could be every single day. I don't ever want to go back to being cold, hungry, and lonely. It still haunts me in my dreams."

Not only is Christian never going to be being cold, hungry, or lonely again, but he will do absolutely everything in his power to make sure no one else has to either. ###

**Welcome Aboard  
to Our Newest  
\$98 Club Members!**

### OCTOBER

Deborah Kanter  
Maria Morales  
Kathryn Pounders  
Leana Revekko  
Mike Singer

### NOVEMBER

Lynn Deegan  
Michael Gendreau  
Noah Matsushima  
Craig Stern

**Thank you for your  
generous support!**



## **Christmas Day**

**Please join us as volunteers  
for our big Christmas Day  
event from 2:00-5:00pm on  
Sunday, December 25, 2011.**

**We will be providing food,  
sleeping bags, and bus tokens to  
hundreds of homeless and poor  
adults and children.**

**Volunteer spaces are very  
limited and will fill quickly  
so early registration  
is recommended.**

To register, please go to:  
**[WWW.FOODONFOOT.ORG](http://WWW.FOODONFOOT.ORG)**



Graduate Lee D. with Rian

Lee Dunlap is the quintessential jack of all trades. He traveled all over the East Coast, owning his own business, working in the hospitality industry and was a successful jazz musician. After great success for 40 years as a composer and song writer, Lee was given a rude awakening when the industry took a bad turn and he could no longer pay his bills. In addition to the bad turn, Lee's businesses faced devastation after the unfortunate event of 9/11. In a matter of months, everything Lee had worked for disappeared.

Lee moved to Los Angeles from Clearwater, Florida in March 2010 and realized that starting over at the age of 56 was going to be a challenge. The goal for Lee was to visit family and to see if there was a place for him to build a stable life. Soon after, he realized that even though he had an impeccable resume, the economy in California made it impossible for him to create a new life for himself.

After countless job interviews, Lee found himself homeless. Lee was so embarrassed that he couldn't find a job and found it difficult telling his family that he was struggling to make ends meet. Instead of opening up to them, he decided to live at a pastry shop located in Los Angeles temporarily until he could find something bigger and

better. The owner of the shop would allow Lee to sleep in the shop in exchange for part-time work during the day. Lee states, "My life was getting harder and I was so tired. I barely slept at night because of the high crime rate near the pastry shop. It was time for a change." Soon after, through a friend, he found the Work for Food (WFF) program.

Lee entered WFF in April 2010 picking up trash on Sundays on a volunteer basis. Pleasant, polished and with a courteous demeanor, Lee arrived every Sunday prepared to work in order to change his circumstances. On August 14, fifteen weeks into the program, Lee was promoted to a "gray shirt." Lee's hard work, positive attitude and dedication to the program finally paid off. He was constantly validated and

**"Age is an  
issue of mind  
over matter.  
If you  
don't mind,  
it doesn't  
matter."  
~ Mark Twain**

acknowledged by his crew leaders and fellow participants. He was known to be encouraging and an optimistic leader. It was no surprise that he soared through the program and was promoted to a "gray shirt." He explains, "I just needed someone to give me a chance. I am so grateful for this opportunity; the program has changed my life for

the better." As for his "gray shirt" responsibilities, Lee was assigned to pick up trash on Selma Avenue in Hollywood 7-days-a-week in exchange for a Ralph's gift card, a cell phone to communicate with Food on Foot (FOF), and a monthly bus pass.

Lee was thrilled for his upcoming emergence into the job market. On August 18, 2011, only days after he was promoted to a "gray shirt," Lee proved to the WFF program that he was ready to maintain a full-time job and was prepared for the next step in the program. FOF helped him obtain a 40 hour a week, minimum wage job as a bus boy for Tender Greens Restaurant, owned by Erik Oberholtzer, in Santa Monica.

Not only was Lee given a great job, he also found himself a great mentor in the Executive Chef, Rian Brandenburg. In the midst of opening a new restaurant and working 70 hours a week, Rian and Lee connected over their love of music, and Rian decided to take Lee under his wing. He has taken the time to act as a positive influence and has taught Lee how to get back in the workforce. With a new job and a new mentor, Lee was also given the opportunity to receive reconstructive dental work by Dr. Drossman, Food on Foot's miracle dentist.

On Sunday, September 11, 2011, Lee was handed a set of keys to his very own apartment. With the help of Food on Foot and the Work for Food program, Lee Dunlap has become a self-sufficient individual who is once again a tax payer, not a tax burden. It is awe-inspiring, not to mention aptly appropriate, that Lee received the start of his new life on the day he lost it 10 years ago. It is safe to say that this was truly meant to be.

**To learn more about our programs:  
[www.foodonfoot.org](http://www.foodonfoot.org)**

# Sponsor a Sunday!

We invite you to gather up to 30 business partners, co-workers, friends, and family to celebrate making a difference in the lives of others by sponsoring a Sunday serving. Your tax-deductible donation of \$2500 will provide chicken dinners and healthy snacks to at least 200 homeless and poor children and adults, as well as purchase food gift cards for the participants in our Work for Food program. To select a date or for more information, please call us at:

**(310) 860-0022**

A very special thank you  
to Food on Foot's  
Advisory Board for their  
efforts in holding a  
holiday "fun"raiser at  
Vodvil in Hollywood on  
Nov. 15, 2011. Proceeds will  
benefit our holiday servings!