



News Release

Free Lunch for 5000: International Event in Omaha Highlights Food Waste

Omaha will become the third U.S. city to join the global campaign to shine a light on food waste with a Feeding the 5000 event. Five thousand lunches made entirely out of fresh food that would otherwise be wasted will be served free to the public on **Sunday, October 4, from noon to 4 p.m.** at Lewis & Clark Landing, 345 Riverfront Dr.

The event is organized by the Omaha nonprofit Saving Grace Perishable Food Rescue, along with Feedback, the London-based organization behind the Feeding the 5000 campaign. The Omaha event is presented in collaboration with Food Day and a coalition of local organizations, including Hunger Free Heartland, No More Empty Pots, VNA Cooking Matters and others.

“Feeding the 5000 will be a spectacular public celebration around solutions to food waste,” said Beth Ostdiek Smith, president and founder of Saving Grace Perishable Food Rescue. Local chefs will create a soup recipe – which will be served to the public -- made from surplus vegetables, such as misshapen sweet potatoes, crooked carrots and onions that are not cosmetically perfect.

The event also includes on-stage cooking demonstrations by celebrity chefs – including chef/co-owner of the greenest restaurant in America Clayton Chapman, local bands playing food-inspired music and children’s activities. Food Day member organizations will provide interactive booths designed to educate visitors about food waste and inspire them to take action at home and in their communities.

In preparation for the celebration, Feeding the 5000 volunteers will glean thousands of pounds of vegetables from nearby farms that may otherwise be thrown away or ploughed back in the soil because they don’t meet strict retail specifications. Volunteers will gather for a chopping party on October 3 at the Salvation Army Kroc Center to peel and dice the surplus produce. Chefs will also incorporate perishable food rescued from local food vendors in their recipes.

Feeding the 5000 events call attention to the global issue of food waste – at least a third of the world’s food doesn’t get eaten – and highlights solutions that everyone can implement.

The first Feeding the 5000 event was held in London in 2009. Since then, events have been held worldwide from Paris to Dublin, Manchester, Sydney, Amsterdam, Brussels and most recently in

Vancouver and the Cannes Film Festival. Feeding the 5000 came to the United States for the first time last year, with events held in Oakland, Calif., and Chapel Hills, N.C. New York City also will host an event in November.

Additional details on Feeding the 5000 Omaha are available at www.savinggracefoodrescue.org.

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About Saving Grace Perishable Food Rescue

Saving Grace picks up perishable food donations from area restaurants, caterers, cafeterias, grocery stores, delis and food distributors, and this food that would otherwise go to waste is delivered the same day to local nonprofit agencies serving families in need. Since operations began in October 2013, the nonprofit agency has delivered more than 235 tons of perishable food from over 18 local food purveyors to 16 nonprofits feeding our hungry neighbors. The second part of Saving Grace's mission is raising awareness and educating the community on food waste and hunger.