

Stepping Into New Territory

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2018 SENT Seminar Participant

*Last September, the NBA Incubate Initiative welcomed its largest SENT Seminar cohort yet! The annual four-day training opportunity equips Disciples social entrepreneurs of faith for leadership and change as they nurture emerging health and social service ministries. This project, **Saguaro Community Kitchen/ the Sol Food Initiative** is East Tucson's first and only community kitchen. The goal of this effort is to broker community partnerships and programs located within the community kitchen.*



Saguaro Christian Church is a faith community where love meets life and creates relationship. Saguaro is a movement where generations meet and change the future. Saguaro is an idea where art meets a holy longing and creates the unimaginable. Saguaro is a mission where hope meets the community and acts with courage. This is our ethos. This guides our steps, our hands, our feet, as we seek to meet Christ in ministry among God's people. Out of this motivation for being church we decided to feed the multitudes. Saguaro Christian Church is building East Tucson's first and only community kitchen.

We see this community kitchen as a tool to eliminate food insecurity within the surrounding neighborhoods. It can bridge a gap within the plethora of services available in other parts of the city by fostering interagency relationships and cooperation. In essence, the kitchen creates a force multiplier. We build a space and an opportunity for Tucson nonprofits and religious communities to partner, to innovate, and to dream.

To assist, Saguaro formed "the Sol Food Initiatives". This 501(c)3's purpose is structured as a human-centered approach to nonprofit organization. We see the Sol Food Initiatives operating in these ways:

1. Creating a collective impact between nonprofits

2. Launching pilot initiatives to explore new approaches at eliminating food insecurity through food sovereignty

3. Managing the social enterprise portfolio of the community kitchen.

Beginning summer of 2019, Saguaro Christian Church, Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona's Caridad Community Kitchen, and the Sol Food Initiatives are creating our first initiative: the Great Plate, a biweekly seven-hour initiative, seeking to eliminate food insecurity and promote food sovereignty. The program includes three months onsite and enrollment in a community supported agricultural project for six months. The initiative is fourfold: a free lunch with professional instruction on preparation, engagement with community partners, reprieve from the heat with peers, and volunteers trained to foster relationships.

This is all new territory for Saguaro Christian Church. There is great hope for the impact of these initiatives, but there is also some anxiety in wading into the work and world of the Tucson nonprofit scene and trying to create partnerships of mutuality. In this regard, NBA's SENT seminar was a blessing. Saguaro was able to send a leadership team to ask questions, dream, make changes, and learn new terminology, but most importantly to be affirmed that we are doing God's work and...that we aren't that far off the mark in the middle of all this dreaming.

*The NBA incubates new ministries, supporting social entrepreneurs of faith who are serving their communities in a variety of innovative ways and empowering these Disciples-led health and social service projects to focus on growth, impact, and sustainability. Learn more at **nbacares.org/incubate***