

Harold L. Johnson — “Brother”
May 2017

Letter to Steve Harvey Foundation about Loaves and Fishes
As told to Michael Rosen

Dear Mr. Harvey,

My name is Harold L. Johnson, but everybody calls me Brother. I am telling my story to Michael Rosen, who is my tutor and is typing this letter for me. But the words and experiences are my own.

I lived in Washington, D.C., all my life. For a lot of reasons, I never learned to read. Now, I am learning to read and go to school twice a week and also meet with Michael.

I started as a volunteer security guard at Loaves and Fishes over 20 years ago. Loaves and Fishes has been around for many years and helps a lot of people in different ways. I printed out their webpage so you can know more about it. I was homeless in my 30s and also lost my mother. I felt down and had to find a way out. I just kept coming to Loaves and Fishes and worked my way up to cook. Being a cook surprised me because I always did this for my family and never thought I would cook for other people.

Now I cook for about 150 people every weekend and on holidays. I love the program because it helps to feed the homeless and anyone who comes through the door. We don't call them “clients”; we call them “guests.” I want people to feel at home so I call them guests. It gives people a sense of pride in themselves. There is also a barber on staff and a lady that brings books, glasses and cosmetics for the guests.

I think I am skilled at what I do. I always try to prepare healthy meals with vegetables and meatless meals so everybody can eat. I always try new stuff and use whatever we get from donations from local restaurants. So I never know what I will cook before. My cookbook is my brain. I know that you like barbecue, and never call it ribs!! I can cook barbecue.

I watch your show all the time and know that you like to help people with your foundation, especially children. One thing I would like to do is cook for the kids that go to your camps and programs. I know that you were once homeless and struggled to make it as a comedian. Your donation would really help the program to keep going. I took pictures of me working in the kitchen so you can see what I do and how Loaves and Fishes helps people.

Thank you for your show and all that you do. If you have any questions, I can let you speak with Denize Williams, Director of the Loaves and Fishes program.

Best,

Brother

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