

## ***MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY THE INN VOLUNTEERS AT THE TRINITY CAFÉ***

The Herbert G. Goldberg – Ronald K. Cacciatore Criminal Law American Inn of Court understands that the legal profession, though at times esoteric and complex, is also a profession of morality, ethics, and a sense of community. Each year, a pupillage group organizes a community service project. This provides our Inn with an opportunity to come together as a group to help a part of our community in need.

This year's project took us out of the courtroom to Nebraska Avenue, just North of Tampa's historic Ybor City. We discovered that many unfortunate and struggling people are nourished, replenished, and treated to the simple niceties of life at a place called The Trinity Café. The Trinity Café



operates on a simple principle, manifested in its mission statement: "Our mission is to restore a sense of dignity to the homeless & hungry while serving a nutritious meal. We faithfully treat all of God's children with dignity, compassion, love, and respect." The Trinity Café serves meals 365 days out of the year – no breaks, no exceptions—from eleven thirty on weekday mornings and nine on weekends, offering lunch during the week, and a hearty breakfast during weekend mornings. The commitment, resolve and endurance of its staff is remarkable. They uphold humanitarian principles, striving to establish a safe-haven where the poor and deprived get an honest meal, surrounded by members of their community. Since its founding in 2001, Trinity Café has served over 1.2 million meals to those in need.

With as many as 380 meals served daily, it is easy to recognize the burden placed on Trinity Café's staff and employees. This is why Trinity Café welcomes local volunteers, who provide not just a hand, but a smile and conversation to people relying on Trinity Café for daily sustenance. Without volunteers, Trinity Café would not be able to operate and support the many homeless individuals in the community. Fortunately,

many volunteer regularly, and they help provide an environment where all are equal at the lunch table, conversing and sharing experiences over a hot meal and cold drink.

On a hot Friday in early March, the Goldberg-Cacciatore Criminal Law Inn of Court, represented by U.S. District Court Judge Virginia C. Hernandez Covington, prosecutors and defense attorneys from the Tampa Bay area, served as volunteers at Trinity Café. The attorneys were fitted with aprons and gloves, and put to work. The Café looks like a restaurant – round tables covered with patterned cloths, upon which sits clean china and silverware wrapped in a napkin. A professional chef prepared the meals, and we served and bussed tables.



Our time at Trinity Café was eye opening. Simply saying one word – “Lunch” – and hundreds of lives are touched, knowing that waiting for them inside is a friend and a good meal. We made sure to promote The Trinity Café to other members of our Inn, as well as friends and family, because The

Goldberg-Cacciatore Criminal Law Inn of Court knows that service to the less fortunate by those able to lend a hand is truly what defines us as a society. Experiences such as these that make us, as lawyers, appreciate and empathize with others we encounter in the criminal justice system. Not all are blessed, but all can be if there are enough good people in the world. It is safe to say that Trinity Café is a good place filled with good people.