A woman came with her two small children to eat one evening at our newly renovated community kitchen, now called One City Café. She said that a friend had recommended she go and take her kids, as, “It’s not like it used to be.” After seeing the renovation and tasting the meal, she said, “This is the first time my children have eaten in a restaurant.”

The words “soup kitchen” can conjure up images of crowded, elbow-to-elbow eating, in non-descript dining rooms. The very words “soup kitchen” carry a stigma; people don’t want to admit that they go to one. We wanted to change that. Last fall, we began a renovation project to convert the “soup kitchen” into a restaurant environment.

With original artwork hanging on brick and cinderblock walls, many volunteers have said that this looks like a restaurant one would find in Westport or the Crossroads. The people who come to eat have been most grateful. With the soup kitchen environment gone, so too is its stigma. That woman who brought her children now does not have to feel embarrassed to eat here.

In addition to a nice place to dine, we are focusing our efforts to provide healthy meals. In surveys conducted before the renovation, we learned that many of those who come for the meal suffer from diabetes, hypertension and heart disease.

Our gratitude goes to many who supported the renovation, with special acknowledgment to Matthew Connolly of MDC Architecture and Ernie Straub of Straub Construction.
New Program at One City Café Teaches College Students about Poverty

With the opening of One City Café, we are piloting a new program called Serve. Learn. Earn. for college students. The nine students participating in the program will serve and interact with guests at One City Café for eight consecutive Tuesdays. Each week, the students read a couple articles on poverty, faith or social responsibility. After serving the meal, they participate in a discussion on these topics. At the end of eight weeks, they earn a stipend to help them with their schooling.

The nine students who are participating in the pilot program have enjoyed this unique learning experience.

One City Café
You are Invited to Volunteer, Sponsor a Night, And Eat

In our efforts to make the eating experience at One City Café as much like a restaurant as possible, we are serving meals at the tables rather than people going through a serving line. Serving this way requires more volunteers. If you go to our website, www.bishopsullivan.org, you can search what days we need volunteer help. We serve from 4:30 to 6:00, Monday through Friday.

Another way you can help is to sponsor a night. For a donation of $150, you can sponsor the night in honor of or in memory of a loved one. Again, you can sign up for this on our website.

We also invite you to come eat at One City Café. We have two options each night for your main meal. It’s open seating and is a good way for people of diverse backgrounds to eat together. If you would like to make a donation for your meal, you can. We hope to see you and your family or friends there some evening.

All are welcome to dine here.