

A Slice of Life

John Marks



For the past 30 years, John Marks has been a familiar face behind the scenes preparing and cooking home-delivered meals.

His route to Hearty Helpings began a little more than three decades ago when he moved to Western New York.

In the late 1980s, John decided to further his education and pursue new job opportunities by relocating to Buffalo. He is a native of Brownsville, a neighborhood within Brooklyn, in New York City.

While working and attending classes at Villa Maria College and then Bryant and Stratton, John realized that one of his passions could lead to a steady career.

"I found that I was really good at cooking," he said. "So, I just kept learning and moving along in the cooking field."

John was named Chef Manager of Hearty Helpings in April. During his years of employment, John worked for multiple companies that held contracts with Meals on Wheels before the founding of Hearty Helpings.

In this installment of "A Slice of Life," John shows how his desire to help others and love of cooking food combined to provide him with a dedicated career.

Q. How do you begin your workday, and what are your responsibilities?

A. My workdays are generally from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. each day. When I get in, I lead in prepping for the next day and do that til about 7:30 a.m. Then, it's time to begin cooking that day's home delivered meals. I lead and prepare anything hot, as well as cold salads, baked goods and desserts. I'm kind of a jack-of-all-trades. There are recipes that we follow and the menu will vary, depending on the time of year. Everything is like a mathematical formula and I make sure that everything is accounted for when preparing the meals.

Q. Is there a personal ideal that helps motivate you each day?

A. I like helping people and for me, this job is where it all starts. My aunt used to receive home delivered meals, so I know how much we help people. To see each person's face light up when they receive a meal, it's a great thing. I do this for them. It gives them something uplifting each day.

Q. How do you maintain your positive attitude?

A. Working in my position, everything is second-nature to me. We make sure everything gets done right and gets done on time. When we're back there, we create magic. And, the work we do, it reflects on all of us.

Q. What do you enjoy about working for Hearty Helpings?

A. This is a really great place to work. I've known a lot of these people for a long time. I enjoy this – it's what I love to do.

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*A Slice of Life is a feature that will be included in each edition of Extra Helpings. Each piece will profile a Hearty Helpings employee and their experiences and responsibilities. To suggest an employee who should be profiled in this section, reach out to **Don Rudewicz** directly or email drudewicz@heartyhelpings.org. Please state the reason for suggesting the employee be profiled by Extra Helpings. ❤️*

happy birthday

Dec. 15 - **Adam Giczowski**, Prep Cook

Dec. 18 - **Frank Nagy**, Driver

Dec. 21 - **Chauncey Roberts**, Prep Cook

Dec. 23 - **Roderick Pinkard**, Dishwasher

Dec. 27 - **Kraig Bolden**, Prep Cook



welcome



Chaz Gallman
Prep Cook

Chaz started working on Oct. 24



Anthony Hunger
Transportation Manager

Anthony began his position on Dec. 11.



Chauncey Roberts
Prep Cook

Chauncey's first day was Nov. 1



Betsy Kusmierski
Quality Assurance Manager

Betsy started her position on Dec. 4

establishing the 'core' and more in 2024

Hearty Helpings' managers met with Amy Pearl last week to begin the process of establishing the organization's Core Values. More meetings are scheduled to be held in 2024.

In addition, the HHI goals and priorities have been established for the upcoming year. Copies of the goals and priorities document, are posted in the breakroom and available by asking Don Rudewicz.

