

## FOOD RESCUE COMMITTEE OF THE SUSTAINABLE EVENTS NETWORK, FLORIDA & CARIBBEAN

Joanna Berens, Food Rescue Chair

The Food Rescue Committee of the Sustainable Events Network, Florida & Caribbean is making great strides in igniting the passion for food rescue within the meeting and event industry. Active in the movement since early 2016, we are looking forward to more exciting progress in the year ahead! Through face to face presentations at local and regional industry gatherings, the committee teaches event professionals the ABC's of food rescue so that they can begin to incorporate a food rescue into a future event. Presenters have included Joanna Berens, John Buschman and Steven Pollock, Network President.

The Food Rescue Committee also “teaches by example”, where appropriate, and is very proud to have executed two food rescues during the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Southeast Florida Climate Leadership Summit which took place in December, 2017 at the Broward Convention Center. Over 870 pounds of food was rescued and donated to the local charity, LifeNet4Families. Committee members, Ken Samuels and John Buschman, took the lead on organizing the rescues; Francis Purvey, John Udell and Joanna Berens also helped pack up the food on-site.

2018 was also off to a great start! \*\*For over 20 years, Florida International University's Chaplin School of Hospitality & Tourism Management has been hosting the Food Network & Cooking Channel South Beach Wine & Food Festival in partnership with Southern Glazer Wine & Spirits. Each February the event, the largest of its kind in the U.S., attracts more than 75,000 foodies to sample some of the best food America's chefs have to offer. As is common with very large events, not all the food that has been prepared and brought to the beach gets consumed. At eight of the largest events, after thousands of guests have had their fill, carefully coordinated food rescue efforts make certain that viable leftovers go to feed some of the neediest members of the community.

Driven by hospitality management professor (and Food Rescue Committee member), John Buschman, and a small army of his students, the Festival's “food rescue” efforts this year helped provide about 18,000 meals for the Miami Rescue Mission, including pasta from Barilla's Italian Bites on the Beach hosted by Giada De Laurentiis and sliders from the Heineken Light Burger Bash hosted by Guy Fieri.

“Recovery from some of life's problems can start with a hot meal in your stomach,” Buschman said of his motivation to ensure leftover food supplies the community's shelters and kitchens. It's an interdisciplinary effort involving students from Buschman's popular course *Social Responsibility in the Hospitality Industry* working alongside student volunteers from FIU's Student Social Work Association and the Student Dietetics Association to ensure that nothing goes to waste.

\*\*parts of this article were adapted from the 3/08/18 story by Clara-Meretan Kiah published in FIU News

**Interested in learning more about Event Food Rescue?**

Check out our video: <https://vimeo.com/187210907>