

# Foot Notes

"Food on Foot turns tax burdens into tax payers."

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## Losing Everything in Hurricane Katrina and Practicing an Attitude of Gratitude

By Rachel Roberts



**Dometra J. — Gray Shirt**

It's hard for many of us to imagine the devastation of losing our homes and possessions in a single day. Food on Foot's (FOF) newest Gray Shirt, Dometra J., has experienced this kind of loss on multiple occasions. As a victim of Hurricane Katrina, Hurricane Gustav, and Hurricane Ike, Dometra has found herself homeless again and again. In awe of her resilience and stability, I asked her how she was able to get past these traumatic events. She responded, "It's work to maintain balance when you're out of your comfort zone and I have to ask myself 'What can I do to overcome this?'" She continued, "I refuse to be beaten by [homelessness]. So, I'm practicing an attitude of gratitude."

Dometra came to FOF after relocating to Los Angeles to be closer to her sister and mother. Surviving on food stamps only, she says the first four months of being homeless in Los Angeles left her in a state of shock. Dometra has worked in professional settings most of her life but has never completed her degree. When she started having children, they became her focus and her job was motherhood.

While discussing her attempts to find employment, she explained her difficulties: "Now that I'm applying for minimum

wage jobs as a homeless female, it's been a very big challenge. I have no retail or restaurant experience because I held jobs that were in offices... costumer service, medical billing, administrative assistant, and other social service roles. I fall between the cracks because I don't have a degree to get me in the door for the kinds of jobs I had before I was a mother. I need someone to take a chance with me or I need to finish my degree."

She expressed that finding FOF was not a coincidence, "It's like this program was designed just for me!" After being heavily recruited by another Green Shirt, she attended FOF for the first time in early October 2014. She admits that she was apprehensive about the two hour trek down Sunset Blvd. Her crew leader and a FOF graduate was so motivating that she finished the day energized and proud of herself for being able to walk so far. She was convinced after one day that FOF works! "I believe in the program and I can put that gray shirt on and walk down the street knowing this is my chance to get out of homelessness," she said.

Dometra was awarded her Gray Shirt on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 2014. In tears, she told the crowd that FOF was the only program she had seen that did what was promised. "[FOF] followed all the way through with their promises and I've been involved in a lot of programs," she said. She is now employed at Wally's Wine & Spirits, which is owned by Christian Navarro, a FOF Board Member who graciously stepped in and offered her the job. On her first day at work, she talked about how grateful she was to have the support and help of FOF. In addition, she said, "I'm just going to tell [FOF] every day, 'thank you' for this opportunity."

**Please Volunteer!**

## Welcome Aboard to Our Newest \$98 Club Members!

### NOVEMBER

Dorothy Edmed  
Scot Finck  
Asher Gottesman  
David Kramer  
Liza Marquez  
Pierre Melki  
Ernest "Rus" Miller  
Jeremy Mooney  
Oleg Piller  
Marilyn Prindle

### DECEMBER

Charles & Mele Black  
Nicole Boccumini  
Zach & Jen Goldsmith  
Eric Hassan  
Dustin Hughes  
Tom Liebengood  
Jenene Macklin  
Susan Matchett  
Rebecca McTavish  
Sarah Mohageri  
Susan Perryman  
Arlene Recano  
Stanley Rothbart  
Jeff Stein  
Liz West  
Christina Wolf

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**Christmas  
Serbing**

**Sunday, December 21, 2014**

Register early as space is limited.

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