

Share My Meals with Florham Park Rotary

FLORHAM PARK - The Florham Park Rotary welcomed two members of the Share My Meals organization to their Friday morning, June 13, breakfast meeting at the Florham Park Diner.

Volunteer Coordinator Karen Kleppe Lembo and Share My Meals Senior Volunteer Associate Emily Bailey provided the reasons for the founding of the organization and the important service it provides to members of the community who are experiencing food insecurity.

Share My Meals is a statewide nonprofit focused on safely and efficiently recovering prepared, surplus meals from commercial cafeterias and transporting them to local nonprofits and organizations. They recover meals from over one dozen sites in Morris County and distribute them to nourish. NJ, Market Street Mission and Homeless Solutions

where they are used to help those in need.

More than 134,000 nutritious, delicious meals were recovered in 2024 alone that would have otherwise gone to waste, ending up in dumpsters. The organization continues to actively grow their efforts in Morris County to ensure that no prepared meal goes to waste that needn't.

Their visit with the Florham Park Rotary is part of their effort to share their work with groups of community-minded and engaged citizens in the hopes of spreading the word. They seek to encourage people to get involved as a volunteer meal transporter. Explained Peter Nicolas, Florham Park Rotary Sergeant-At-Arms, "They reached out to our club because they seek help to pick up meals from local business cafeterias and schools and then deliver them to nearby

community organizations. If any other local organizations are interested in learning more about the role of a volunteer meal transporter they may ask questions via phone (716-335-1634) or email (volunteer-nj-north@sharemy meals.org).

Readers can visit the website to learn more about volunteer opportunities and to sign up: <https://sharemy meals.org/get-involved/#Volunteer>.

To learn more about the local Florham Park Rotary, visitors are very welcome to attend a weekly Rotary breakfast meeting at the Florham Park Diner at 182 Ridgedale Ave. Meetings are 7:47 a.m. to 8:50 a.m. every Friday. More ways to learn more about the



Pictured presenting are Volunteer Coordinator Karen Kleppe Lembo and Share My Meals Senior Volunteer Associate Emily Bailey. Photo credit Peter Nicolas for photo)

Florham Park Rotary are to visit www.FlorhamParkRotary.org, or call or write Membership Chair George Gregory at ggregor@florhamparkrotary.org or (917) 848-0982.

To Thine Own Self Be True: Be It More Precious Than Gold

BY RICHARD MABEY JR.
GUEST WRITER

AREA - At the dawn of the Summer of 1963, I was nine years old and had just completed the fourth grade. Summer was a most magical time for me, during my childhood. Behind the old Mabey Homestead, at the end of Mabey Lane, acres and acres of wooded land abounded. Grandpa Mabey and I would often walk the path from the end of Mabey Lane to the path along the old Morris Canal. I learned ever so much from my paternal grandfather, Watson Mabey.

Grandma and Grandpa Mabey lived with us in the old Mabey Homestead. As you looked at the old farmhouse, that my great grandfather built in 1890, my bedroom was on the right hand side and faced along West Drive. Grandma and Grandpa's bedroom, was right behind mine and faced along West Drive and our old backyard.

I remember Mom would

cook breakfast for us. After breakfast, Grandpa would often ask me if I wanted to take a walk with him, down to the old canal banks. I would happily say yes to dear old Grandpa. We would walk down to the end of Mabey Lane. Grandpa would always take a reverent and earnest moment to look at the home, that stood at the end of Mabey Lane, that he had built when he was just a young man.

Then we would walk the wooded path to the towpath of the old Morris Canal. Along our walk, Grandpa would point out what wild plants were edible and which ones were poisonous. We would often see a group of deer, feasting on the leaves of the maple and oak. And, Grandpa would point out the birds brightly chirping and clinging high upon the branches of trees. Grandpa knew all so very much about the ways of the wild life, the sacred secrets of the enchanted forest.

Lately, I have felt, all so strongly, the presence of dear old Grandpa Mabey. I often wake up in the middle of the night and see Grandpa sitting at my desk chair. His crooked smile, his large hands, his kind eyes look upon me as I swim in a place between sleep and awakened consciousness. And one message, of late, I can hear Grandpa whisper to me, in his nightly visits is to care for the wild birds that fly among the trees.

I now live in Northwest Ocala, having recently moved from The Villages in Florida. A certain ache has loomed in my heart, of missing the many dogs of my old neighborhood



Yours truly atop a step ladder, assessing places to hang bird feeders.

to whom I once walked and cared for when their mommy and daddies went away to visit their adult children. But I could feel the call of a new mission in life, an awakened purpose. And, that was to fulfill the gentle whispering call of Grandpa's nightly visits, to care for the wild birds that flew among the trees.

There are seven Live Oaks on the property of my new home. They are magnificent trees, strong and towering tall. In the past couple of weeks, I have begun buying inexpensive bird feeders. I fill them with wild bird seed, climb my ladder and hang tie them with strong string to the branches of my Live Oaks.

My little yard, both the front and back yards have now become a wonderful, magical, open-aid aviary. The melodies of the chirping of birds is a most beautiful sound. In just

a very short period of time, when I am doing yard work in my front yard, people in the neighborhood will comment that my yard has a cheerful feeling. I simply tell them that it's all because of the birds singing and flying about.

In taking the time to refill my many new bird feeders that I have placed throughout my yard, I have found a new purpose in life. It may sound like a small thing. It may seem all so insignificant. But it has all brought a certain joy and happiness to my life. For it really is true, to thine own self, be true. To be true to yourself, to fulfill your own inner calling, is more precious than gold.

Richard Mabey Jr. is a freelance writer. He has recently had two books published. He currently hosts a YouTube Channel entitled, "Richard Mabey Presents." Richard may be contacted at richardmabeyjr@gmail.com.

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