# The Eating Event – Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving dinner is an event; for the most part, nearly all of us look forward to – reconnecting with relatives, the extravagant portions, and the time to reflect on all of the good things life has given us in the past year. Unfortunately, this is not true for everyone. For many people they don’t have a home to spend Thanksgiving at. This year, it happened to be our beloved cook, whom many of us consider part of our family. Lee has worked at the Kappa Sigma house for over three decades. She has seen the good, bad, and ugly of the hundreds of men who have been initiated at this chapter. Every morning when I wake up at 6:45am I look forward to seeing Lee and having our morning conversation over my traditional cereal and milk. I don’t view her any different insomuch as that she is an employee and I re-hired her after a three-year hiatus; I would still want to spend time with her even if she didn’t have to be there every morning. I like to believe the same is true from her perspective. It saddened me to hear she didn’t have a home for Thanksgiving, so I surprised her with a Thanksgiving hosted by the Brothers of Kappa Sigma last year.

From a preparation standpoint, I sadly did not have time to show off my cooking skills but I knew from Lee being a simple person that it was best to keep it uncomplicated. Boston Market was the easy way to go, all I had to do was order and heat up the food. After ordering and picking up the food it was time to start heating it up in preparation for Lee, her daughter, and fiancé to show up. We have a commercial kitchen, which even for an experienced cook such as myself, is daunting at times. My Border Collie Labrador puppy loved the entire process of heating up the food and being our mop by licking up all the food that was accidentally dropped. There are, unlike at home, not that many serving trays that are made for making a nice presentation for food. We ended up serving the food on a basic circular plastic table, covered with a white tablecloth, and the food in aluminum serving trays that are made for serving quantities of people. Even though it may of not been as exquisite as most people would see it, we all were so happy to spend time with those whom many of us consider family, even if not by blood. We have two long rows of wooden tables with bench seating. Since Lee was our guest, we had Lee and her guests eat first. You could tell there was a little social anxiety from Lees’ daughter and fiancé since they did not know us. They chose to sit the farthest away from us and didn’t feel the most comfortable, sadly. Our conversations were limited to mutual topics with them, which happened to be only about the movie that they were going to see that night. We reminisced about the shenanigans that Lee has seen us get ourselves into over the decades. From her seeing me after a night of all-too-hard of partying at 6:30am in the morning drunk as a skunk trying to make a frozen pizza and failing miserably to the older alumni and their beach parties that they used to throw in the backyard, there was no shortage of laughter. After about an hour and half of eating turkey, ham, mashed potatoes, casseroles galore, yams, corn, mac and cheese, and a plethora of options for pies we were stuffed. While most Thanksgiving dinners are multiple hours in length, this one was fairly short in comparison. We knew that Lee and her family had to leave for the movies but, in the time of gratitude that the holiday season is known for, she uttered some of the delightful words to me, “This is the nicest thing that anyone has done for me in over thirty years.” Lee may have been lonely and sad but by joining us we were able to turn the situation into a time of joy and new memories, even if it was incredibly simple and to most Americans non-standard. They were thankful, but little did they know that eating Thanksgiving at a frat house with no real nice way of presenting food, fratty light (natural light, Lees’ favorite beer), and the obvious role reversal where the younger individuals cooked the meal for the more senior it made for one of the most memorable Thanksgiving for me.