



Photographs: Julie Goldstone

NOTABLE EDIBLES

FOOD-AS-MEDICINE FOR THE MASSES

God's Love We Deliver's rooftop herb garden helps provide nourishing meals and care to sick New Yorkers.

Laying on a bed of seasonal vegetables is a beautiful piece of salmon topped with a perfectly evergreen shade of pesto. It's the type of sauce that looks so good it's hard to resist dipping a finger into it and taking a lick. It's also just one the ways the chefs at God's Love We Deliver (GLWD) use herbs growing on a rooftop a few floors above the organization's SoHo kitchen.

Since 1985, GLWD has been revolutionizing the idea of food as medicine. Back then, GLWD was a one-woman organization that began with Ganga Stone delivering food via bicycle to a man dying from AIDS. More than 20 years later, the food-as-medicine movement has come a long way—as has GLWD. The organization expects to serve 1.8 million meals in 2018, up from 1.2 million in 2015. On any given weekday, a team of chefs and volunteers prepare some 7,000 meals in their kitchen, which then get packaged up and delivered to people suffering from HIV/AIDS, cancer and other life-altering illnesses throughout New York City, New Jersey, Westchester, Nassau and Hudson counties—all for free.

“You give the right food to someone with a particular illness, and magical things happen,” says GLWD CEO Karen Pearl. “People are healthier, happier and it lowers health costs. You can feed someone meals for half a year for the cost of one night in the hospital.”

The rooftop herb garden is one of the organization's latest tools in helping supply nourishing meals. While throughout its history GLWD has focused on creating high-quality yet simple meals using local, whole ingredients, the organization struggled with a desire to grow some of its own food.

Nature's medicine cabinet.

“You give the right food to someone with a particular illness, and magical things happen,” says GLWD CEO Karen Pearl.





**WINE.
WAINSCOTT.
WE SHIP.**



**MERRY & HAPPY EVERYTHING
WITH GRATITUDE AND JOY
FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS**

**SOMMELIERS ON STAFF
FREE SHIPPING IN NEW YORK
ALWAYS FREE DELIVERY**

**In Wainscott Plaza between the
Seafood Shop & Levain Bakery
OPEN 364 DAYS**

**631.537.2800 | waincottmain.com
getsomm@waincottmain.com**



Prepared with love and a smile. Volunteers help bring the meals together for GLWD.

Of course it isn't exactly feasible to grow enough to meet their daily needs, but GLWD thought they could at least grow their own herbs and made sure a rooftop herb garden was included in the plans for their new building at 6th Avenue and Spring Street that they moved into three years ago. Today the raised roof captures and recycles rainwater, serves as a pollinator habitat and provides 16 kinds of fresh herbs, weather permitting, from May to Thanksgiving.

High above the city, the garden's an oasis for GLWD staff, volunteers and visitors who can rent the space for gatherings. GLWD's 800+ volunteers take turns maintaining the garden, and for many New Yorkers, it's a (sometimes rare) chance to put their hands directly in soil.

GLWD chefs and nutritionists help to determine what herbs grow in the garden, and while many of the herbs are easily identified as seasoning in the meals, some are more subtle. You'll find chives from the garden in the mashed potatoes, basil in the pesto and marinara, even lemongrass in iced tea and lavender popping up in dessert, which every patient gets, diet permitting. One of the things GLWD prides itself on is expanding people's palates while also ideally giving patients comforting, delicious foods.

"The rooftop herb garden has been a wonderful resource for the kitchen at God's Love We Deliver," says executive chef Daniel Metzger. "We love that the herbs are a natural, flavorful substitution for salt and artificial flavoring, which we do not use. It's exciting to explore new sauces and dishes that use the herbs we grow. Every herb we pick adds great flavor to go along with all the love in every meal."

While this year's growing season will soon be ending, the herbs will continue to show up in meals, simply dried, and GLWD staff will get busy working out what to plant for next year.

—Bridget Shirvell

Photographs: Julie Goldstone