

Charlotte

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020

HOME

DESIGN & DECOR®

Kitchen & Bath

PLUS:
KITCHEN
CONFIDENTIAL
COLOR CRUSH:
LOVELY LILAC



LOOK FOR THE HELPERS

By Jim Noble

Photography by The Plaid Penguin

I smile as I lift the speckled stoneware out of the brown box with brown tape wrapped around it.

The pottery plates and bowls are a gift, arriving at The King's Kitchen just after Christmas, not long after we'd wrapped up a renovation at the non-profit restaurant.

There's a lot of talk about giving and generosity these days. Mr. Rogers once said that when he was a boy and would see scary things on the news, his mother would tell him to "look for the helpers." One of the nice things in this uncertain time is that helpers are out in full force. People are volunteering at food banks, donating meals and face shields to healthcare workers, and grocery shopping for children who typically get their biggest meal of the day at school.

During the pandemic, our partnership with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Dream Center has exponentially expanded its neighborhood outreach program. In a typical year, we give anywhere from 35,000 to 40,000 meals to the homeless and hungry. But in four months, from March to June 2020, that number more than doubled, as we provided 80,000 handmade, hand-delivered meals to residents in some of Charlotte's most vulnerable neighborhoods. The pandemic made our partnership doubly important, serving as both an outreach ministry for people in need and a paycheck for some of our restaurant employees. More meals meant more people were needed in the kitchen, so we were able to keep people at work to keep up with the demand.



Because The King's Kitchen is a non-profit, we rely heavily on the kindness of others. We have to initiate capital campaigns for things like kitchen or bathroom improvements. Donations keep the lights on. Sometimes, though, kindness finds us in unexpected, surprising ways.

In the fall of 2019, we received an email, completely unsolicited, from someone who wanted to connect us with a North Carolina-based potter so that we could upgrade our dinnerware. The writer said we could pick out the dishes we wanted from East Fork Pottery, and he would foot the bill. Simple as that. And let me tell you, these works of art don't come cheap.

When I opened the brown box from East Fork Pottery last December, an overwhelming feeling of gratitude swept over me. That someone thought to provide us with these beautiful pottery pieces in the restaurant we use to support our neighbors in need is what I consider an ultimate act of kindness. The handmade dishes comfortably cradle our crab cakes, provide a perfect platter for Aunt Beaut's pan-fried chicken, and are a beautiful backdrop for a bowl of shrimp and grits. Unfortunately, with the pandemic and the temporary closure of The King's Kitchen, they've sat untouched for a while. But that just means that when we get back to service, each bite off of them will be a little bit sweeter. ♦



“ONE OF THE NICE THINGS IN THIS UNCERTAIN TIME IS THAT HELPERS ARE OUT IN FULL FORCE.”



Chef **JIM NOBLE** is the executive chef and owner of **NOBLE FOOD & PURSUITS**.
For more information, visit **NOBLEFOODANDPURSUITS.COM**.