

Pay-it-forward brunch at Soby's designed to unite diverse Greenville community

By **Ariel Turner** - Aug 14, 2018



A pay-it-forward restaurant founded by Jon Bon Jovi in New Jersey has inspired an upcoming pop-up brunch at Soby's, 207 S. Main St., on Aug. 18.

Designed to feed anyone, regardless of their ability to pay for their meal, the first ever "S.E.A.T. at the Table" event in Greenville has been organized by some of the most recent graduates of the Riley Institute at Furman's Diversity Leaders Initiative and is sponsored in part by Soby's dining group Table 301 and BMW.

A S.E.A.T. at the Table — Sit Eat And Talk — is designed to be a welcoming pop-up, pay-it-forward event to nourish, educate, and unite the diverse Greenville community, regardless of background or means.

With timed seatings at 10 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., the organizers hope to ignite a spark and foster a spirit of pay-it-forward to help build up the local community. They are also encouraging people to either sit with friends or join one of the community tables and mix it up.

Rather than a set price, participants will have to the option to pay what they can for brunch or pay-it-forward to others via a donation to the Harvest Hope Backpack Program. The donations will go toward helping provide for children to sit and eat at their very own tables.

The menu will be similar to Soby's Sunday brunch and will have ground-floor seating for about 100 for each of the two times, with additional seating upstairs should walk-ins require more space.

One of the organizers and graduates of DLI's 25th class, Ed Stein, Upstate South Carolina regional president of Pinnacle Financial Partners, says his group developed this project based on what they saw as a need in the community.

"Restaurants have become such an integral part of what makes Greenville great," Stein says.

But the socio-economic disparities between those who are able to dine out regularly and those who struggle to feed their families at home are ever present, he says.

According to the DLI program description, since 2003 it has sought to teach participants to understand their diversity and inclusion "blind spots" and how to suspend assumptions. The goal is for them to come away with focused decision-making skills and a deep knowledge of how to effectively manage and lead increasingly diverse workers, clients, and constituents.

Stein approached Soby's founder Carl Sobocinski about helping with the project. Sobocinski is a past graduate of DLI.

"Carl is all about giving back to the community," says Michaela Leitch, who handles events and sales for Table 301 and has organized Soby's part of the event.

Soby's will put together smaller tables to form the community tables that will seat 10-12 people. The goal is for guests sit across from people they've never met, and using some

provided talking points discuss what makes Greenville great and what could be better or different, Stein says.

Stein says his DLI group received guidance from Maggie Kane who recently founded a pay-it-forward café, A Place At The Table, in Raleigh, N.C.

Stein says although their part of the DLI project is done, they hope future classes may take up the mantle to grow the idea and continue it.

“We hope it does not stop here,” he says.

Visit aseatatthetablegvl.eventbrite.com to register for the brunch.



Comments

Related Articles



Community Foundation Legacy Brunch

March 13, 2016



West Greenville Voices



Our Community - Greenville

Dr. Robert Wyatt, former executive director of Highlands Biological Station, will discuss "Mosses in the..."



Community Spotlights: Fall for Greenville, Hughes Academy, and more

Highlights in your community this week.



gvjournal



[Load More...](#)

[Follow on Instagram](#)

GREENVILLE

SUBMIT & ADVERTISE

[Contact Us](#)

[About Us](#)

[Legal](#)

[Our Staff](#)

[Subscribe to Print](#)

[Print Archive](#)



[Advertise](#)

[Sponsorship Request](#)

[Editorial](#)

[Events](#)

[Legal Notice](#)

[Press Releases](#)

[Submit News](#)

[Contributor FAQs](#)

GET THE INSIDE SCOOP

Get the latest news delivered to your inbox.

Which newsletter(s) do you want to subscribe to?

GJ: Inside Scoop

UBJ: The Inbox

TOWNie

[Subscribe](#)



GREENVILLE JOURNAL

UPSTATE
BUSINESS
JOURNAL | **UBJ**

TOWN

atHome

GVLTODAY