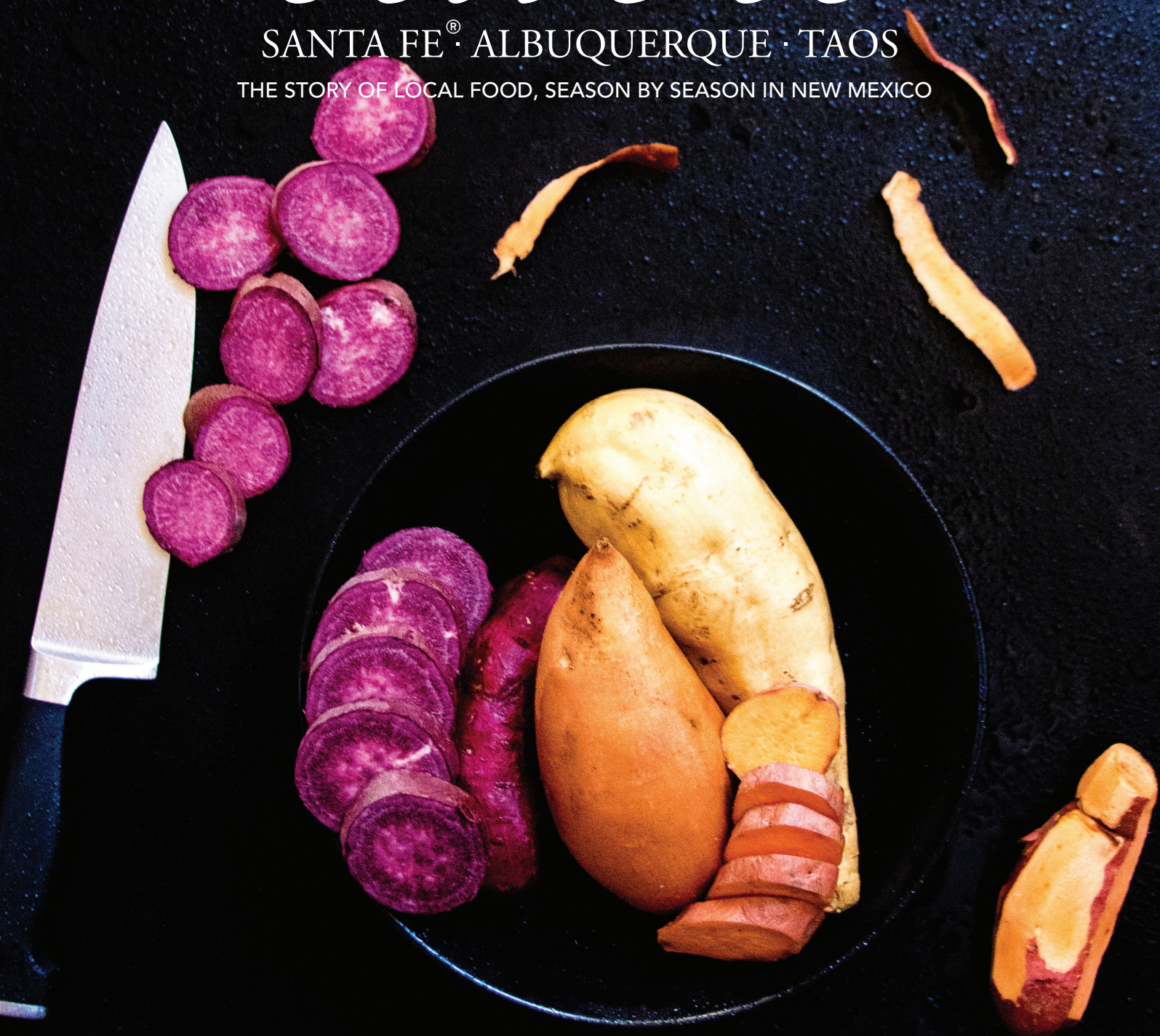


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THE STORY OF LOCAL FOOD, SEASON BY SEASON IN NEW MEXICO



## DO IT YOURSELF

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# 2018 LOCAL HEROES

Restaurant, Santa Fe	Paper Dosa
Restaurant, Albuquerque	Farina Pizzeria
Restaurant, Greater New Mexico	The Love Apple
Gastropub	Rowley Farmhouse Ales
Café, Santa Fe	Sweetwater Harvest Kitchen
Café, Albuquerque	Tia B's La Waffleria
Chef, Santa Fe	Edgar Beas, Anasazi Restaurant
Chef, Albuquerque	Marie Yniguez, Bocadillos
Food Artisan	Barrio Brinery
Food Shop	M'Tucci's Italian Market & Deli
Food Truck	El Chile Toreado
Beverage Artisan, Non-Alcoholic	Iconik Coffee Roasters
Beverage Artisan, Beer	La Cumbre
Beverage Artisan, Wine	Gruet Winery
Beverage Artisan, Spirits	Little Toad Creek
Cocktail Program	Radish & Rye
Farm, Santa Fe	Green Tractor Farm
Farm, Albuquerque	Rio Grande Community Farm
Farm, Greater New Mexico	Schwebach Farm
Organization	Kitchen Angels
Best Food Event	Santa Fe Wine and Chile
Olla Award	Jane Stacey, Cooking with Kids
Best <i>edible</i> Article	Sarah Wentzel-Fisher



# KITCHEN ANGELS

AN INTERVIEW WITH TONY McCARTY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
BEST ORGANIZATION



Kitchen Angels Executive Director Tony McCarty, photo by Stacey M. Adams.

Tony McCarty has been the executive director of Kitchen Angels for twenty-four years. Prior, McCarty honed his business expertise as the sole proprietor of a successful design company. Early in his tenure with Kitchen Angels, he led a successful capital campaign to build the Coll Green Angel Depot, a facility devoted exclusively to ending hunger in New Mexico. McCarty has guided Kitchen Angels to become one of Santa Fe's best known and loved nonprofit social service

agencies. He also helped spearhead the creation of the City & County of Santa Fe Advisory Council on Food Policy.

## **Tell us a bit about what Kitchen Angels does.**

We believe no one in our community who is homebound because of a chronic, surgery-related, or terminal medical condition should ever go without appropriate nutrition. Making sure they have enough to eat is simply the right thing to do.

That's why, since 1992, Kitchen Angels has been delivering free, freshly prepared meals five days a week to homebound, chronically ill individuals. Meals are formulated to meet individual dietary needs and follow one of six dietary tracks. In our twenty-five years, we have prepared and delivered more than 1.2 million meals to more than 5,500 people, ninety-eight percent of whom live below federal poverty guidelines. With only four full-time employees, Kitchen Angels relies on 345 weekly volunteers. This keeps our costs low so that eighty-one cents of every dollar we receive goes directly to clients.

Food is life. And yet, for chronically ill people, nearly one in three don't know where their next meal is coming from. In Santa Fe County, close to 21,000 people don't know whether they will be able to eat or whether they will go to bed hungry. They have neither predictable access to food nor the physical ability to cook.

Feeding homebound individuals helps keep them out of nursing homes. This is important for several reasons. First, from a quality of life perspective, most people prefer to remain in the comfort and safety of their homes for as long as possible. Home-delivered meals help achieve this. Second, from a cost perspective, comparing the \$1,700 it costs each year to feed a Kitchen Angels client to the more than \$75,000 it costs each year to house a person in a nursing home, the savings to publicly funded healthcare programs is roughly \$44 for each dollar spent. Third, [studies have shown] the cost and frequency of hospital admissions and lengths of stay decreased for clients receiving home-nutrition services.

Our vision is simple: no one who is homebound because of illness should ever go without appropriate nutrition, regardless of their ability to pay for services.

#### **What is some of the best feedback you receive from clients?**

Of the many notes we receive each year, two stand out:

*"I am so grateful for your wonderful service. There are so many times over the past months that I would have gone without had it not been for Kitchen Angels."*

*"I am so very thankful for your service, and for all of you who participate, which allows me to manage the very difficult (and if the truth be known, humiliating) situation I find myself in. Your volunteers are so warm and gracious and add a spirit which means so much for one feeling poorly and receiving help. It's a quality hard to measure—apart from the excellent food itself which shows so much care. I cannot conceive of how I'd cope without your help."*

#### **Why is sourcing local food, when possible, important to Kitchen Angels' mission?**

We strive to keep our clients in the best possible health and there is absolutely nothing better than locally sourced, fresh produce to promote well-being. We cook from scratch every day, so when farmers,

or home growers, bring in their freshly picked produce, it is usually incorporated into our meals within a day—when the nutrients are at their peak.

#### **What does Kitchen Angels provide its clients beyond a good meal?**

Companionship and an opportunity to connect with community are major benefits of our program. It's not just nutritional needs that Kitchen Angels addresses. Our volunteers create meaningful and often powerful and long-lasting relationships with our clients. Frequently, our delivery volunteers are the only social interaction clients experience in a day. Research points out that isolation and the accompanying loneliness can send an individual down a path toward worsening health and even more intense loneliness.


#### **What are some of your proudest achievements or milestones as an organization?**

Delivering our one millionth meal was a huge milestone for our volunteer-driven agency. And now we're over 1.2 million meals and going strong! Kitchen Angels has also been voted one of Santa Fe's favorite charities in our local "Best of" contest each year. It's gratifying to enjoy the support of our community. But, I think we're most proud of the fact that even with our steady growth, year after year, we've never had a waiting list for services, nor have we turned down a qualified individual.

#### **What's ahead?**

We will complete renovations to our facility in February and be equipped to spread our wings to even more of the homebound population in Santa Fe. Over the past year, we've laid the groundwork to respond to huge changes in healthcare and social services, including cutbacks to services and higher out-of-pocket costs for those who are least able to afford it. We've built a home for our resale store, Kitchenality, and look forward to strong sales that directly support our meal program. Kitchenality sells gently used kitchen and entertaining goods at affordable prices and provides an outlet for some great donated items to be repurposed, recycled, and reused. We will expand our volunteer programs and look forward to providing expertise to other caring angels who can duplicate our program in their own communities.

#### **Is there anything else you would like to share with *edible* readers?**

With all that is happening in the world, many people feel frustrated and at a loss for what they can do to make things better. Volunteering is an excellent way to turn that frustration into action and reap its many rewards. Individually, we may not be able to fix everyone's world, but each of us can help fix the world of someone else. Use your talents, your time, and your treasure to create a meaningful impact on the life of another person and, collectively, we have a measurable effect on the lives of many. That's how the world becomes a better place. 

[www.kitchenangels.org](http://www.kitchenangels.org)

**Edible Santa Fe's annual Local Hero Awards are "people's choice" awards, nominated and voted on by you, our readers, which makes this award all the more meaningful to the recipients.**

