

Soup dinner raises \$5,000 for Pacific Pantry

December 26, 2019



There was plenty going on in Del Norte County on Dec. 14's cold, rainy evening:

The Del Norte High School state championship football game, the Jaycees' eighth-grade girls' basketball tournament, a Madrigals dinner and a host of holiday parties.

But even then, some 140 people turned out for the Empty Bowls Soup Fundraising Dinner at the Crescent City Cultural Center.

The event was hosted by the Community Food Council to focus awareness on everyday food concerns locally, and to raise funds to buy food for the Pacific Pantry.

Andrea Lanctot, the Community Food Program coordinator, said the intimate event was a big success, raising \$5,000. That's enough to cover one month of food for the Pacific Pantry, said Lanctot.

Empty Bowls is an international project to fight hunger, with each ceramic bowl representing a person in the world who is hungry.

A \$20 entrance fee gave guests a choice of a handmade ceramic bowl to take home, more than 15 varieties of soup, five different fresh-baked breads, coffee, hot chocolate and dessert cookies, accompanied by Alexandre Farm's flavored milks.

Lanctot said Cal Fresh Health Living and Champions for Change were helpful in planning, cooking and assisting with the event.

The HSU Ceramics lab, local ceramic artists and thrift stores donated more than 150 bowls. Soups were donated by volunteers and local restaurants Seaquake, Bellenotte, Good Harvest, Ocean 675 and Elk Valley Rancheria. Requa Inn and volunteers supplied homemade cookies.

A silent auction featured 26 donated items including spa services, fishing and rafting trips, yoga passes, garden installations, and local art pieces given by local businesses. The auction raised \$1,400.

Lanctot said Empty Bowls is part of a multifaceted fundraising campaign to keep the Pacific Pantry open after its city block grant funding expired Nov. 1.

The Pacific Pantry, located at the Family Resource Center of the Redwoods and managed by the Community Food Council, is a choice-based food pantry that features local and organic products and serves more than 600 households a month with emergency food.

Since launching the fundraising campaign Nov. 12, \$30,000 has been raised through an online crowdfunding campaign, cranberry sauce sales and donations from Caldwell Clan, Wild Rivers Community Foundation, Humboldt Area Foundation, St. Joe's Hospital, Elk Valley Rancheria and the Philanthropic Fund of the Caldwells.

In addition, individual donations have ranged from \$5 to \$500. The pantry also has received support from schools and organizations that have hosted food drives.

That said, Lanctot acknowledged the Pacific Pantry is not totally out of the weeds. Renewed city block grant funding will not be available until November 2020 - and is not guaranteed.

"The funding they have raised will help them keep the pantry open through the winter months," Lanctot said. "But ongoing fundraising and financial support will still be needed until sustainable funding is secured."

Donations can be made to Pacific Pantry through www.dnatlfood.com/donate.html, by writing a check to the Family Resource Center of the Redwoods (put "Pacific Pantry" in the memo line) or by dropping off food items to the Pacific Pantry at 494 Pacific Ave. High-protein food items are particularly needed, such as peanut butter, canned chicken and tuna, and nuts.