

Organizers are hoping for a well-lit Thanksgiving

November 25, 2019



For 28 years, Thanksgiving has meant “community” for Crescent City residents looking forward to the annual feast with friends, old and new. This year is no exception.

An annual free Community Thanksgiving Dinner will be held once more at the Del Norte County Fairgrounds on Thursday, Nov. 28, from 12-2 p.m.

And this year, organizers hope the lights will stay on. Power went out last year, thanks to a storm, prompting residents to enjoy a candlelit Thanksgiving feast.

Roger Bodenstab, pastor of Crescent City Foursquare Church, and his staff had to scramble to gather spare candles from the church to keep the celebration going. Luckily, the food had already been cooked.

“We had to improvise quickly... So, we’re looking forward to the fairgrounds getting a generator at some point,” Bodenstab laughed.

For the past few years, the dinner has been co-hosted by Crescent City Foursquare Church, the Del Norte County Fairgrounds and Sutter Coast Hospital. The fairgrounds provide the venue - the main hall - Foursquare organizes the details and coordinates the volunteers, and the hospital cooks the meal.

“It is attended by so many,” said Karen Castro, nutrition services manager at Sutter Coast Hospital. “I am happy knowing that families gather together, some of our community leaders and their families, and we also serve some people that may otherwise have not had an opportunity to sit down and eat a hot meal and enjoy that fellowship that comes with this event.”

Last year, the organizers fed roughly 620 people - even with the lights going out - and they expect a similar turnout this year.

Along with preparing all of the classic Thanksgiving favorites, including pie, the hospital is planning to cook upwards of 40 turkeys. “I have 17 people that work with me in the kitchen, throughout the week, so it is a combined effort of all hands on deck,” Castro said.

To keep the dinner free, a number of community organizations, including Walmart and the Wild Rivers Community Foundation, are helping with funds, food and services. The church did not have to raise extra funds to cover this year’s cost, according to Bodenstab.

Several people volunteer the day before and the day of the event to keep things running smoothly. Last year, more than 120 people volunteered, not including the hospital’s staff.

“It’s fun to come down there and see people serving alongside each other. Sometimes they don’t know each other, (yet) they’re good friends afterwards,” Bodenstab said.

What has grown into a collaborative event began with a small group of 10 people or so 28 years ago. They cooked the meals and managed all of the details, eventually inviting organizations to share some of the load.

“It helps the community come together as a family, you know. It’s for everybody, so we have an array of folks coming that eat dinner with their family there, from our board of supervisors to the homeless,” Bodenstab said. “It really is a great community event.”

Foursquare Church is still looking for 30 more volunteers: 15 to set up the day before and 15 on Thanksgiving. To sign up, go to <http://www.ccfoursquare.org/>.