

4H soup and auction fundraiser tops \$10,000

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When an organization like the Del Norte County 4-H Council has 230 active members and supports another 1,000-1,200 students through classroom curriculum, leadership thinks big when raising funds to support its programs.

On Saturday, the organization hosted its annual 4H Soup Supper Country Auction at the Del Norte Fair Grounds. Jacki Bennett, a 4H leader, said the event brought in just over \$10,000 and they fed well over 500 attendees.

Bennett said the event is the 4H's only county-wide fundraiser of the year, while local groups smaller events, like bake sales.

She added their budget allotment for the year is \$25,000 and they normally average between \$10,000-\$12,000 from the annual soup supper and auction.

“The biggest portion of our budget goes toward enrollments. Youth enrollment is \$58. We only charge our youth \$20. Council covers the other \$38. Because we don’t feel that a family with three kids should have to pay that much money to have your youth learn a craft,” Bennett said.

She said community members have several ways to contribute to the fundraiser. Entry was \$8 per adult and \$5 for youth. To whet attendees’ appetites, 4H offered heaping bowls of five choices — clam chowder made by Elk Valley Casino’s Chart Room, tomato bisque from the Lucky 7 Casino, chicken noodle soup donated by Denny’s, chile made by local volunteer Tami Toreson and lemony lentil made by Ladonna Butz.

People and businesses were also able to purchase sponsorship packages — \$500 platinum, \$250 gold, \$125 silver and \$50 bronze. She said they the sponsorship packages brought in more than \$3,000.

Finally, Bennett said about 280 items were donated for the silent auction and another 50 items for the live auction.

“Businesses like Renner, Hemmingsen and Crescent City Trail Rides made donations and a lot of people donated items, too,” Bennett said.

Those items included certificates, a hot water heater, a basket of preserves, muck boots, a cheese basket, a hand-crafted quilt and much, much more.

“We use the money to help youth enroll in 4H as well as send them on trips to 4H conferences and scholarships for our local 4H youth and 4H events,” Bennett said.

Events the money pays for include the 4H Christmas party and regional Presentation Day competitions, rotating between Humboldt, Del Norte or Mendocino counties, or the state finals at the University of California, Davis.

Bennett said 4H is about much more than raising and showing bunny rabbits or horses. In addition to animals, programs include robotics, GPS, outdoor adventure, archery and cake decorating, to name a few.

“4H is a youth program that allows youth, for ages 5-19, to work on a project and develop that project throughout their 4H life,” Bennett said.

“Say, they start with cake decorating. They learn the basics. And by the time they get out, they can actually make beautiful wedding cakes, depending on how long they stay, learning to work with fondant and techniques with the leaders.

“Archery is the same thing — they learn safety, then go in and learn to shoot with accuracy, stance and things like that. The program grows with the youth.”

