

Event to raise funds for Gifts of Hope in Burlington

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BURLINGTON - Although town residents and businesses reach out to residents in need throughout the year, assistance is needed more during the holidays than at any other time of the year.

In an effort to provide some much needed assistance to the Burlington Food Pantry, Summer Winter Restaurant, as part of the Burlington Union's 2009 Gifts of Hope campaign, will step up to the plate by donating 10 percent of sales the evening of Thursday, Dec. 3, to the Burlington Food Pantry.

Summer Winter Chefs Clark Frasier and Mark Gaier, owners of Arrows Restaurant and MC Perkins Cove in Maine, called the Evening of Giving "a wonderful way to feed families in need."

"We're honored to support the Burlington Food Pantry and the important community service they provide and we applaud the Burlington Union for organizing this holiday fundraising program," said Frasier.

Clark agreed, adding giving back to the community as been part of their corporate motto. This is the second year the restaurant has been involved with the Gifts of Hope campaign.

"As a part of the Burlington-Boston Marriot Hotel, the restaurant supports several community organizations, including Children's Hospital Boston, Children's Miracle Network and the Boys and Girls Club of Woburn, among many others," said Gaier.

"As a restaurant dedicated to celebrating seasonality, there is a special significance to the season of giving," said Clark. "No matter what way we are able to give back, it is important to do our part."

Reservations are recommended. For more information, or to make a reservation, call 781-221-6643.

Help always needed

"It's not only during the holiday season that companies in Burlington help us. They come to the aid when we call and ask them, whether it's Summer Winter or some other company," said Valerie Healey, a member of the board of directors for People Helping People, Inc. and also the group's volunteer coordinator for the Burlington Food Pantry. She also serves the sorting coordinator for the Holiday Program.

"This is the time of year we have the largest need for dollars and volunteers," said Healey. "We are very excited about the outpouring of help in the community. It's heartwarming."

The number of families served by the pantry has grown since last year, she added.

"As of last week, we had 147 families. But that number continues to grow as the holidays get closer," said Healey.

Including spouses and children, she expects the pantry will feed approximately 350 residents, adding the number was a "ballpark" figure.

"It could be more," she said. "What amazes me is this is just Burlington families."

"It's a good feeling to know we can support these families with the Holiday Program, which buys and solicits gifts for children up to seniors in high school," said Healey.

Yet another program, the Basic Needs Fund, assists families on an emergency one-time basis, to pay rent, utilities or medical bills.

"Some times the families can't make ends meet that month," she said.

We could not function without the assistance of Burlington companies and volunteers, and they continue to help with the numbers of people in need increasing dramatically now," she said.

It's important to note, Healey added, that the pantry operates as an all-volunteer group.

"There are no paid employees. Everything we get goes directly to the families," she said.

Corporate generosity

Last week, The Burlington Union reported the charitable efforts of Best Buy, which donated \$5,000 to People Helping People during the store's grand opening ceremony. The store's charity did not end there however.

Two weeks ago, Best Buy Mobile, located in the Burlington Mall next to Dunkin Donuts, also donated \$2,000 to People Helping People, for a total contribution of \$7,000.

The details

Giving back to the community

Evening of Giving at Summer Winter Restaurant

When: Thursday, Dec. 3

Time: 5:30 to 10 p.m.

Where: Summer Winter Restaurant, Burlington Marriot, 1 Mall Road, Burlington

Reservations: 781-221-6643



Burlington Union
Summer Winter Chefs Clark Frasier and Mark Gaier