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MPG

Is Your Neighbor Hungry?

By Linda Harper

PLACER COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Placer County boasts some of the most breathtaking scenery and amicable weather in California. It's a county that's experienced robust 5.4% growth over the past few years. Ample jobs are available and its diverse population enjoys abundant housing and a median income of approximately $78,000 per year. Placer County is also home to over 60,000 adults and children who are food insecure, meaning that they are not certain where their next meal will come from. That means one out of every seven people living in beautiful Placer County is hungry; 17,000 are children. Hunger is a hidden epidemic and closer than you think. It could be a co-worker, friend, family member, or your neighbors and their children who are challenged by hunger every day.

Placer County's face of hunger is much like that of the 49 million people in our nation who struggle with obtaining necessary nourishment to sustain life. They are working adults, families with children, single parents, senior citizens and veterans. Seniors represent 30% of our community's undernourished. Every month, many are forced to choose between buying medication and buying groceries.

There's help for hungry Placer County residents. Placer Food Bank, the primary food collection and distribution center for hunger relief efforts in Placer County, oversees the disposition of fresh and non-perishable food with a hands-on approach (7.3 million pounds in 2013 to date), they work through a network of more than 80 local charitable locations. The organization is committed to educating local communities about hunger and advocating for hunger relief. They are the only hunger relief alliance in the region certified by Feeding America, the nation's leading domestic hunger relief charity working to feed the hungry population living in the United States. During 2013 and to date this year, the Placer Food Bank has distributed more than 7.3 million pounds of food to their hunger relief partners.

Partners Make a Difference

Because the hungry population in Placer County is diverse, often their need for food is accompanied by other difficulties such as unemployment, illness, working families with children who can't make ends meet, illiteracy, loss of a home, and other financial situations. The food bank can only do so much to help the large number of people in need. They look to their non-profit partners in the area to help move people past their circumstances into gratifying and productive lives. The collaboration between agencies allows more people to be served in various ways. Through these partnerships, the organization can offer financial education, parenting resources and support, literacy programs, and they're even able to distribute hot, nutritious meals through affiliate's kitchens and individual outreach services. For volunteers, the lifeblood of the Placer Food Bank, these partnerships mean they can now volunteer their time, dollars and resources in more specific ways and in targeted areas.

Community Gardens

In an unprecedented move to further bridge the hunger gap in Placer County, the food bank initiated the Placer County Community Gardens Program last year. The program connects businesses, community organizations and individuals with local gardeners and farmers who volunteer their time to grow, harvest and distribute fresh produce to Placer County families who are affected by hunger.

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Patriot Day: A Tribute to Those Who Serve

PLACER COUNTY, CA (MPG) - Patriot Day, Rocklin's fourth annual tribute to public safety and military personnel, will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, October 11th in the Walmart shopping center on Sierra College Boulevard at Interstate 80.

Hosted by the Rocklin Public Safety Volunteers, the family-friendly event was first held on the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11th attacks on the East Coast, explained President Rebecca Kanowsky. "We remember them by bringing community members together with the many public safety professionals who proudly serve Rocklin each and every day," Kanowsky said.

Proposed by Rocklin Police Chief Ron Lawrence, the event's purpose is to not only pay tribute to those who serve at the local, state, and federal levels, but also to show the public how these personnel work to save lives.

A number of agencies are participating in this year's event, Kanowsky said. Rocklin Police and Fire Department personnel will be displaying a variety of emergency vehicles, including a ladder truck, patrol cars, and motorcycles. Rocklin Police K9 teams will also be on hand.

The Placer County Sheriff's Department's helicopter, which will fly in during the event, will be open to the public. Member of Placer County's SWAT team will demonstrate how a robot can be used to detect and safely detonate a bomb.

H&G Towing, in cooperation with Pick & Pull, will provide two vehicles that will be used by the Rocklin Fire Department to demonstrate how the Jaws of Life can be used to extricate people trapped inside a vehicle. .

The ceremonies will open with the presentation of colors by the Rocklin Police Department's Honor Guard. Performances by the Rocklin and Whitney High School bands will be presented throughout the day.

More than 80 vendors will be on hand to supply information about products and services and sell arts and crafts as well as a variety of food. For the younger set, there will be carnival rides available. Fast Track Hobbies will set up a slot car race track.

The inaugural event was initiated in September 2011 by Rocklin Police Chief Ron Lawrence and came together through the efforts of several volunteers, including Rocklin City Councilmember Diana Ruslin.

Six months following the event, Kanowsky spearheaded the formation of the Rocklin Public Safety Volunteers. Under her direction, the non-profit organization has been responsible for organizing the event for the past three years.

In addition to hosting Patriot Day, Kanowsky pointed out, the group has supported the Rocklin Police and Fire Departments with numerous fundraisers to purchase emergency equipment, including paying for and training a K9 for the Rocklin Police Department.

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55 Tons of Trash Removed During Great Sierra River Cleanup

AUBURN, CA (MPG) - An eager and willing 4,460 volunteers showed up to participate in the sixth annual Great Sierra River Cleanup. Preliminary results reveal that an impressive 55 tons of bottles, cans, appliances, car parts, and other debris were pulled from California's drought-stricken waterways during the event. The Great Sierra River Cleanup is sponsored by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) in partnership with nearly 60 community organizations at over 100 sites throughout the Sierra Nevada. (A full list of sites and participating organizations can be found on the SNC Web site: www.sierranevada.ca.gov.)

Volunteers flocked to beaches and riverbanks, teaming up to collect a wide variety of garbage that would otherwise remain in the rivers, lakes, and streams. Some of the more interesting items removed during this year's cleanup include a rubber ducky dressed as a hockey player, a master cylinder for a 1933 truck, a Barbie doll arm, a Bullwinkle Moose stuffed animal, and Christmas tree lights.

Photo courtesy of Sierra Nevada Conservancy.

"The Sierra Nevada region provides more than 60% of California's developed water supply, and is the primary source of water flowing into the Delta," said SNC Assistant Executive Officer, Joan Keegan. "Every piece of trash our volunteers remove helps to keep California's water clean."

This year, sixteen members of the Assembly and Senate showed their support for a clean water source by signing up as co-chairs of the event. These elected officials represent communities in the Central Valley, the Delta, the coast, and the mountains, all of whom rely on the Sierra Nevada for portions of their water supply.

The Great Sierra River Cleanup combines with the annual Coastal Cleanup Day each year to become the largest single-day volunteer event in California. This partnership serves to promote good stewardship of all of our watersheds, from the source to the sea.

The Great Sierra River Cleanup would not be possible without the hard work of thousands of volunteers, dozens of local community groups, and the following supporters: the California Coastal Commission, the California Conservation Corps, Sierra Nevada Brewing Company, Camp-California, California Ski Industry Association, YubaNet.com, SMUD, Sierra Pacific Industries, Sierra Heritage Magazine, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Adventure Sports Journal. ★

Source: Sierra Nevada Conservancy