

PANTRY PICKENS



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Upcoming Events

Pastor's Pot May 4, 2013

Financial Assistance:

First, Third and Fifth Friday of each month.

SEVENTH ANNUAL TASTE OF PICKENS— BY DAN HUTH

“There’s so much going on here, I don’t know where to start!” an excited Taste of Pickens attendee told her friend on the other end of a cell phone conversation. She was standing in the middle of the huge main hall of Chattahoochee Tech, the walls lined with over 20 food booths, as hundreds of happy diners made hard choices from the specialty dishes offered by the vendors.

Auctioneer Tim Logan strolled among tables filled with happy diners, holding a microphone in one hand and a gourmet cake aloft with the other. “Whaddy give for this cream-filled butter-frosted work of art?” he called, whipping the crowd into an auction frenzy. “C’mon!” he challenged the bidders, “The sugar and butter cost more than that!”

Just outside in the halls surrounding the event, artists and crafters showed off their works to prospective buyers at this year’s new attraction, the Holiday Bazaar. Shoppers loaded up on decorated horseshoes, wreaths, cookbooks, preserves and more just in time for Christmas giving.

And attendees held their breath and their tickets hoping to win the door prize. Dayton Adams of Jasper was the lucky winner of two tickets to the Fox Theater’s presentation of the *Beauty and the Beast* donated by KnowPickens.com

Then there were the “People’s Choice Awards” for Best Booth Decoration (61 Main) and Best Food (Last Catch’s Shrimp & Grits and Crab Dip on Crackers).

But the main attraction, as in the six previous years, was the tables groaning with the signature offerings of Pickens County’s finest restaurants, caterers and bakers. “This was the smoothest Taste of Pickens ever,” enthused Event Coordinator Regina Camp. “Each year our volunteers seem to refine the process a bit more, and this year it went off without a hitch. I so much appreciate all the volunteer and community support that makes this event possible.” Proceeds go to CARES enabling it to offer food and financial aid to hungry families in Pickens County.

It takes a village to put on an event such as this 7th Annual Taste of Pickens. For example, without the support of the *Pickens County Progress* and other local media outlets, this event could never be more than a dream. The local vendors who donated their specialties and man power to serve it created the attraction that drew generous diners from all over North Georgia. Then, parking for hundreds of cars had to managed and the hall kept in an orderly condition as hundreds came, dined and left happy.

The Timothy House, the Explorer Club from PCHS, the Wildwood Christian Academy Community Outreach and the CARES volunteers who all worked so hard for so long may have some idea of how important their efforts were toward making this event a success. But they may never know how powerfully those efforts will touch the hungry of Pickens County.



Tim Logan—Cake Auctioneer

Tommy Lindsey and Regina Camp, Event Coordinator

Melanie Johnson and Carole Torrey: CARES Volunteers

CARES VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHTS

Financial Assistance Counselors



Front: L-R Mary Bracegirdle, Brenda Farr, Judy Ferris, Cathy Poirier

Back: L-R Kathy Boutwell, Ann Wilson, Fran Bishop

Not pictured: Ed Weng, Katharine Armentrout and Carolyn Anderson

Please see facing page for article about Financial Assistance Counselors.

FROM YOUR DIRECTOR

“...in God’s world is where I like to be and stay.”

Can you believe it is 2013? Until a week ago, I had a somewhat hard time wrapping my mind around it being 2013. At 67 years old it is a challenge to believe I have lived past 2003 and 2010 and now it is even 2013. However, as God is good all the time, he brought me into the new year with new work to do for Him, older work to continue, a blessed family to have, pretty good health, a few new challenges, and an overall good outlook about my work and life in God’s world. God’s world is where I like to be and stay. He has enabled me to divorce myself from this world’s and my problems. For me this is where great peace, joy and happiness rest in my heart.

My prayer is that for each and every volunteer at CARES to have or get a lot of what God has given me. Maybe you have even more than I. May 2013 be the best year of your life.



Larry

FROM THE FRONT LINES BY FRAN BISHOP

The financial assistance program at CARES has been helping Pickens County residents with rent, mortgage payments and utilities for over 10 years now. The program began when CARES was located on the Holy Family Episcopal Church property. Brenda Farr and Mary Bracegirdle were two of the original three counselors. Brenda Farr coordinated the program until the end of December, 2012 and Mary Bracegirdle is still with us. Fran Bishop, current program coordinator, started before CARES moved to its current location. Over the last few years, Katharine Armentrout, Carolyn Anderson, Ed Weng, Ann Wilson, Judy Ferris and Cathy Poirier joined us. Kathy Boutwell keeps the checkbook straight and follows up on clients who have not yet worked their volunteer hours at the thrift store or CARES. We have a dedicated and caring group of counselors

who work hard to meet the needs of our clients with the money that we have on hand.

Every counselor has stories they can tell about how happy clients are when we can help them. One client was so happy that she went down the hallway exclaiming "Thank you Jesus, Thank you Jesus." Some clients begin crying when they know that a bill will be paid. Some clients that we help actually come back and make a donation to CARES when they get into a better financial condition. Mary has a story of one of the clients who touched her heart so much when she first started working as a counselor. He was a big healthy man but had his arm in a sling from an accident while playing with his children. Tears ran down his face as he said, "I have never not been able to take care of my family". In today's work atmosphere many of our clients say similar things.

Over the last few years, we are able to help clients with

more money than when we first started. In the beginning years, it was often that we could only help someone with \$50 out of a \$200 or \$300 need. We are so happy that we can sometimes help with more money such as filling up a propane gas tank for a client without having to send them to other sources to come up with the rest of the amount. We are truly appreciative of those in the community whose giving make this possible!

The CARES counselors feel that they benefit as much as the clients that they help. It is a good feeling to leave on Friday and know that you have made a difference in someone's life. Judy summed it up when she said that the most important thing that a counselor can give beside financial assistance is HOPE. We all strive to be someone who listens and guides as well as someone who gives the clients a check to pay a bill.

"...the most important thing a counselor can give ...is HOPE."

9 million elderly at risk for empty pantries—Alesha Williams Boyd—USA Today

There are about 9 million people 50 and older living at risk of going hungry every day, a 79% increase in a decade, according to AARP.

As they desperately fall behind even more in the wake of job losses and obliterated retirement investments and savings, advocates say it will take more aggressive and creative approaches to help the nation's eldest citizens get food on the table. Carlos Rodriguez, executive director of the FoodBank of Monmouth and Ocean Counties, New Jersey, says there are multiple reasons for the rise in seniors' food insecurity: unexpected expenses

and investment losses can bring those on fixed incomes to the brink of financial disaster, he said.

"So many household have to make choices between paying for the utilities, paying for housing or putting food on the table," Rodriguez said. "Seniors have perhaps the added expense—'Do I take care of my prescription drug or health needs?'"

As a result of the escalating problems, senior health and social services agencies have turned their sights to supplying food; likewise, anti-hunger organizations have turned their sights to seniors. But obstacles to those efforts range from budget cuts to

seniors' own reluctance to accept help, organizers say.

Last year, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - also known as the food stamp program-in the United States spent 7.4 billion more than it did the year before.

A House vote on a farm bill that would cut \$16 billion from the program is awaiting a vote after the November elections, legislators say.

"For the past few years, uncertainty has been the new normal for too many Americans 50-plus said Mr. Jenkins of the AARP.

"For the past few years, uncertainty has been the new normal for too many Americans. . ."

MORE TASTE OF PICKENS PHOTOS

89 Cares Drive
P. O. Box 1342
Jasper, GA 30143

706-253-4777
Food Ministry/Director

706-253-4778
Financial Assistance

Hours of Operation

Monday
1:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m.
(food only)

Wednesday
10 a.m.—Noon
(emergency food only)
(new clients)

Friday
8:30 a.m.—Noon
(food)

Financial Assistance is provided the first, third & fifth Friday of each month. The first 10 financial clients are assisted.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

If you know someone who would like to volunteer, please have them call Larry Starr at 706-253-4777

Visit our Website at
www.PickensCares.org

