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Feast for Friend: feed yourself, feed those in need

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By Lisa Mitchell
Patriot Editor

Area restaurants are giving back to the community, simply by feeding their customers. Thursday nights, a percentage of patrons' bills are donated to Friend Inc. Community Services in Kutztown by establishments participating in Feast for Friend.

Recently, The Inn at Moselem Springs donated 15 percent of patrons' bills to Feast for Friend on July 16. Local guitarists and vocalists Jolene Windmiller and Kevin Spyker provided entertainment for the evening.

"It's a chance to do something for an organization that does a lot for the community," said Martha Roth, Inn co-owner with her husband, Thomas, and Rowena and Mike Rodino.

Roth is glad that Friend Inc. asked the Inn to participate.

"They're a wonderful organization. Sadly, they're too needed in this area," said Roth. "We're very lucky to have them."

Not only did the event introduce new people to the Inn, Roth said it was also a worthwhile event to part take in.

Friend Inc. Board Chair Rev. Keith Rohrbach, of Trinity Lutheran Church in Kutztown, joined in the event. His favorite part was that Feast for Friend is something new the non-profit organization is doing.

"It reaches out to a larger part of our community," said Rohrbach.

He said Friend Inc. is important because the organization "responds to the needs of those in the community who are living on the edge... offer a helping hand to get them through some hard times."

Friend board members Troy and Kathy Greiss, of Fleetwood, also enjoyed a night out to eat while giving to Friend. They spread the word to their friends.

"We'll have a little fellowship and fun tonight," said Kathy.

Fleetwood Rotary Club member Marcy Theis, of Fleetwood, brought her friend, Carol Kutz, of Fleetwood, a sixth-grade German teacher at Fleetwood Middle School. They agreed that came out for the event for good company and great food.

Kutz liked the thought of giving to a good cause.

"It's an easy and fun way to give a little bit of our treasures to a good cause," said Kutz.

"I think my favorite part of this event was seeing how people responded," said Friend Inc. Executive Director Erica Hesselson.

Reading the evaluation forms, Hesselson received feedback that participants felt good that they were giving back, and ordered

more food.

“People were very happy to be part of an event, with out having to ‘do’ a lot. It made them feel good. To see that was wonderful for me,” she said.

Hesselson’s fundraising goal for the entire Feast for Friend is \$5,000. This is the first year and the purpose is to have a fundraising event that is exciting and easy for people to participate.

“It works really easily: People come in for lunch and dinner. All you have to do is go in and eat,” she said. “No vouchers necessary.”

The funds will go toward serving our clients through Friend’s case management services, parenting classes, food pantry and career link. Some of the money raised may also be transferred into the emergency cash fund, where Friend assists families with past due rent or heat on a one-time emergency basis.

“I hope people learn more about Friend Inc. — what we do for the community, what we do for the families we serve, and also, what people can do for us,” said Hesselson. “Maybe it is not a cash donation they are able to give, but volunteer hours, which are just as important.”

Feast for Friend is held on Thursdays until Aug. 27. TK’s Sushi raised \$225 on July 9. The next one will be today, lunch and dinner, at CC’s Wooden Grill with the Manatawny Creek Ramblers performing blue grass. Reservations recommended.

Upcoming events are breakfast and lunch at Janelle Restaurant on July 30; Blue Orchid Inn on Aug. 6 with musical guest Heidi Faust (reservations recommended); lunch and dinner at The Market Cafe on Aug. 13 with musical guest La Overtoner; Basin Street Hotel on Aug. 20 with Mike Mizwinski, and Jeremy Sayer and the Wounded Allies performing, separately, folk and acoustic; and Global Libations on Aug. 27 with acoustic singer Holly Landau and a surprise band performing.

“Without the restaurants, we would have no event,” said Hesselson. “I would like to say many thanks to Tammi, Martha, Colleen, Scott, Carl, Leigh, Chino, and Jeff and Nicole. It was a great honor to work with all of these owners. I would also like to thank the customers for coming out and I hope you enjoy your dining experience. Bon Appetit!”

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