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FEATURED

Spaghetti fund-raiser to kick off homeless housing fund

By Frank Robinson, Staff Writer Feb 4, 2018 Updated Feb 8, 2018



MONTHLY EATS—The Timberline restaurant (formerly Buck's) will host monthly fundraisers to support a new workforce housing project. Photo Frank Robertson

The first in a series of monthly fundraisers for the lower Russian River area's new workforce housing support project takes place in Guerneville this Wednesday night (Feb. 7) at Timberline Restaurant (formerly Buck's) at the corner of Mill and Fourth streets.

"We're going to have family-style meals and various entertainment and special guests for a small suggested donation at the door," said Jeniffer Wertz of the Guerneville Community Alliance in an email announcement.

The Timberline fundraisers will continue on the first Wednesday of the month to support the Guerneville Community Alliance fund for needy workers, said Wertz. The dinners will also function as a marketing tool for the program and to generate online donations.

"Our website is being set-up to take monthly re-occurring automatic donations from debit/credit cards, which can be in any denomination. We hope this will make it possible for almost anyone to contribute to the fund on a monthly regular basis, including the workers themselves, community members who want to support them, their employers, vacation rental owners, etc.," said Wertz. "Mostly, we want this to be a real close knit community event for the workers to take a night off and be recognized for all their hard work and their struggles to keep their bills paid and a roof over their head."

This week there will be a \$15 suggested donation for a family style spaghetti dinner, or a \$5 suggested donation for those who would like to order off the menu or just come for cocktails, said Wertz. “We’re going to keep it simple for the first one and see how it goes.”

The river workforce housing fund was established last month with a \$50,000 Sonoma County Homeless Task Force grant targeting lower Russian River homelessness. The Alliance project was set up to help low-wage hospitality industry employees make ends meet.

“We’ve already issued two rent checks this month for local working families who would have otherwise become homeless,” said Wertz.

The non-profit Russian River Alliance (which includes the Guerneville Community Alliance) is one of five recipients that were awarded county grant money last month to address homelessness along the lower Russian River. The five groups now have \$450,000 to spend over the next 18 months on projects with a shared goal of housing at least 50 unsheltered residents of the lower Russian River where homelessness is rising while it’s decreasing elsewhere in Sonoma County, according to the homeless count last year.

Applicants don’t necessarily have to be service or hospitality workers, said Wertz. They just have to be local area workers in Rio Nido, Guerneville or Monte Rio, “and they have to be in a situation where they have no other alternatives.”

Lower River Community Workforce application forms are available online at the Russian River Community Alliance website and other social media such as Facebook. The website address is <http://www.russianriveralliance.org/>.