

Soup's On to help hungry

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This year's Soup's On fundraiser is 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday at Tellabs Atrium, 1415 W. Diehl Road, Naperville.

Soup, and so much more, will be served at the 2010 Soup's On! fundraiser showcasing food from 30 area restaurants at the benefit to end hunger and homelessness in our community.

The event began two years ago, when The Rotary Club of Naperville was looking for something to replace Oktoberfest, which it previously had hosted. It also happened to be at the beginning of the current economic crisis.

According to then-Rotary Club President Bill Garlough, realizing that service agencies were probably going to be hit hard by a combination of decreased funding and an increase in need, the Rotary decided to support local food pantries and homeless shelters.

As such, it chose DuPage PADS, Loaves & Fishes and Hesed House, all of which have seen an increase in demand, to be the beneficiaries of the event. According to Garlough, Loaves & Fishes has been gaining a hundred clients a month, feeding 16,000 people last year. DuPage PADS also saw a 49 percent increase in demand last year.

"It's a very appropriate, timely and meaningful fundraiser to get behind," said Garlough, who also owns My Chef Catering in Naperville.

Soup's On! is meant to be a reference to soup kitchens, where food is offered to the hungry for free or at a reasonably low price. The event is also an opportunity for Naperville-area restaurants to each feature a signature dish.

With donations of the food, beverages and venue, costs are minimized, meaning more of the money raised can go back to people in need. Last year the Rotary was able to divide \$100,000 equally among the three organizations.

"I think the community has really embraced it," Garlough said. "Food is such a basic necessity. Everybody relates to it and can get behind it."

The event boasts something for everyone. And families, even those with young children, are encouraged to attend together. While attendees are welcome to dine on as

many of the culinary offerings as they would like, from Sullivan's steak sandwiches to Catch 35's smoked oyster chowder, there is also a play area for children hosted by the DuPage Children's Museum.

And the Bears' game will be playing on a flat-screen TV in a bar area. Throughout the event, the award-winning musical programs of School Districts 203 and 204 will provide live entertainment.

"You're having a nice time in a beautiful setting and helping your neighbors that need help," Garlough said. "It has a community feel. It's a celebration. You're doing something positive."

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