

'Fighting hunger with beauty

Potters donate handcrafted works for purchase at Empty Bowls, Nov. 4-6

BY ABIGAIL CUKIER
NEWS STAFF

Hamilton Food Share's resource and development director gets tears in her eyes every time she attends the Empty Bowls event.

"It's an incredible event," Rachel O'Reilly said. "What is magical is the fact that each potter gives a piece of themselves and of their soul."

"They are fighting hunger with beauty."

The Potters Guild of Hamilton and Region will hold its seventh Empty Bowls sale Friday, Nov. 4 to Sunday, Nov. 6 at the Dundas Lions Memorial Community Centre.

Choose a soup bowl, mug or decorative bowl made by a local potter. Every \$25 purchase will buy a handmade item and allow Hamilton Food Share to source \$125 worth of food because of its food recovery program.

The program takes healthy and good food deemed surplus and un-salable by industry standards and redirects it onto the tables of the people who need it. This means that every \$1 donated gives the organization \$5 of buying power.

The 2010 Empty Bowls event raised \$28,540 for Hamilton Food Share.

When the local guild learned about Empty Bowls, they jumped at the chance to get involved.

Empty Bowls is an international project to fight hunger, which has potters make and donate bowls as a reminder that there are always empty bowls in the world.

"It is part of our mandate to help the community and we thought this was the perfect fit," said Chris Sora, vice-president of the guild and chair of the Empty Bowls committee.

Empty Bowls is free to attend and part of the guild's fall sale, so visitors can also see and purchase other work. All proceeds from Empty Bowls items go to Hamilton Food Share.

"It has become so popular. Last year, it was a zoo," Sora said. "For five years in a row, we were sold out by Saturday night. Last year, we

added 40 per cent more bowls and still almost sold out."

About 1,400 bowls were sold last year.

"People who visit are helping Hamilton Food Share and getting something handcrafted," Sora said.

This year, in addition to soup bowls, potters have been invited to donate mugs, as well as Raku. Raku is a pottery technique with its origins in 16th-century Japan. Because Raku ware is fragile and porous, it is generally non-functional and decorative.

"Some potters only do Raku, so they were left out and couldn't donate. Now, we are allowing them to participate and offering more variety," Sora said.

O'Reilly says Empty Bowls is one of Hamilton Food Share's largest third-party fundraisers.

According to Food Share, more than 18,400 people use food banks in Hamilton and about 44 per cent are children.

Hamilton Food Share helps supply food to food banks run by Good Shepherd Centres, Salvation Army, Mission Services, Welcome Inn, Wesley Urban Ministries, St. Matthews' House, Neighbour to Neighbour Centre, Stoney Creek Community Food Bank and Living Rock Ministries.

Empty Bowls event info

Empty Bowls will take place at the Dundas Lions Memorial Community Centre, 10 Market St. S., Dundas.

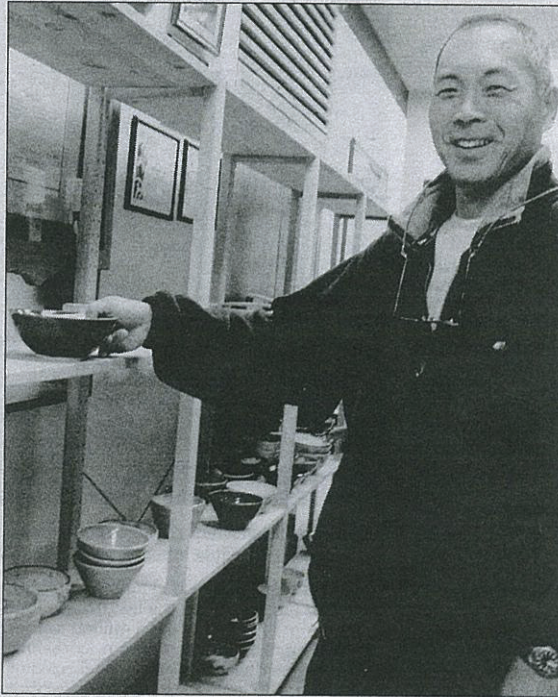
The sale is open Friday, Nov. 4, 3 p.m. to 10 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 5, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday, Nov. 6, noon to 4 p.m.

All proceeds from the sale of each \$25 bowl, mug or piece of Raku, will go to Hamilton Food Share.

Each piece has been handcrafted by a member of the Potters Guild of Hamilton and Region and donated for the sale. Empty Bowls is one of Hamilton Food Share's largest third-party fundraisers.

Last year, more than 1,400 bowls were sold, raising more than \$28,000.

For information, e-mail info@hamiltonpotters.ca.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Empty Bowls committee chair Chris Sora stocks the shelves at last year's event. Through donated items from potters, the sale raises funds for Hamilton Food Share.

Help us help less fortunate

In order to help close the poverty gap, *Hamilton Community News* is once again taking up the fight against hunger by teaming up with Hamilton Food Share for a month-long food drive and fundraiser. Representing the *Ancaster News*, *Dundas Star News*, *Hamilton Mountain News*, *Stoney Creek News* and the *Real Estate News and Buyers Guide*, *Hamilton Community News* and its generous advertisers are spearheading an initiative to fill the shelves at Hamilton Food Share and its food bank affiliates throughout Hamilton.

Get involved and learn more by reading this special feature in the weekly edition of your community newspaper. Look for the food drive drop-off locations and participating businesses.



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