

Empty Bowls celebrates 11 years feeding St. Joe

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Temperatures loitering around the 30s Tuesday made it a good day for a hot bowl of soup.

That what's more than 400 community members thought as they gathered inside the Wyatt Park Baptist Church meeting hall to participate in the 11th annual Empty Bowls Luncheon.

Patrons sampled soups from 13 area restaurants, including Luna's Fine Dining and Catering, Fredrick Inn Steakhouse and the Benton Club, with proceeds going toward funding the Hunger Coalition.

The Hunger Coalition, which is comprised of Open Door Food Kitchen, Second Harvest Community Food Bank, InterServ and Catholic Charities, was brought together by Commerce Bank about 11 years ago to help combat hunger in the community.

Joe Houts, Commerce Bank executive and spokesperson for the Hunger Coalition, said the goal is to raise \$25,000 to fight hunger in Northwest Missouri and provide meals on Sunday at Open Door.

"Before we started this 11 years ago we had a void on Sunday and we all pooled our resources and decided let's do this and it's been a great success ever since," Houts said.

A variety of donors and sponsors including Nodaway Valley Bank, Freudenthal Home Health, and Nodaway Valley Bank, among others, also contributed to the Hunger Coalition cause.

Daniel Moyer, Open Door Food Kitchen executive director, said the fundraiser is highly beneficial to the work of his organization.

"We serve probably 10,000 sack lunches a year because it's funded by this program. Without this they wouldn't be able to eat on Sunday," Moyer said.

After receiving small samples from all the sponsoring restaurant tables, patrons got to vote for their favorite soup. Goldie's Farmhouse Restaurant took home a \$500 first place prize for their soup. Luna's Fine Dining and Catering won \$250 for second place, and the Benton Club took third place with a \$100 prize.

The Hunger Coalition has raised more than \$200,000, in the last 10 years to help support its partnering organizations in the battle against hunger.