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Hannah Uutela

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Humboldt County and COVID-19: How the Community has Contributed

By Hannah Utela

Do you need ideas on how you can safely help your community and those in need during the COVID-19 Pandemic? The COVID-19 Pandemic has hit Humboldt County, California with 53 confirmed cases (Lost Coast Outpost). For our small, tight community this has shocked and scared locals, but this has also inspired others to take action. Volunteer organizations have made their way through Humboldt, providing their services to healthcare workers, first-responders, and those in need. Other community members and local businesses have also sacrificed their goods and services to help others in Humboldt. Many different organizations and businesses have provided their help and services to the Humboldt County community in many different ways during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Feed the E.R. is a volunteer organization that developed during the pandemic, and works to provide food to emergency room workers. Eureka City Council members worked through Feed the E.R. to bring lunch to emergency room workers at St. Joseph Hospital in Eureka (Lost Coast Outpost). Eureka's mayor, Susan Seaman participated in Feed the E.R., and wanted

to show her appreciation towards the local emergency room and healthcare workers. “Everyone has a role to play in this event, whether it’s the person who stays home like they’re supposed to, to the people who work at the grocery stores. But, ultimately, it’s a big deal because it’s life and death and this is where the real difference is made. Thank you for coming in when it’s hardest and protecting all of us,” said Seaman. Feed the E.R. has also visited other Humboldt County local hospitals including Redwood Memorial, and Mad River Hospital. Feed the E.R. was developed after the shelter-in-place was issued, and the idea was sparked through Eureka local Betsy Totten (Times Standard). “Our families look forward to our weekly night out to dinner together and one of our favorite little local restaurants, so we thought we should do the same,” explained Totten. Feed the E.R.’s purpose is not only to help healthcare workers, but also to support local restaurants during the pandemic. Feed the E.R. has provided great services to our local businesses and healthcare workers, as well as inspire council members and other locals to join in on helping out the community.

Although many local businesses have had to close their doors to the public, owners still discovered ways to help those who are still working essentially for our community’s safety. Bubbles, a natural health and beauty store in Arcata, has been producing and giving away their hand sanitizer to first-responders and locals in the community. The owner of Bubbles, Carla Hayes, began donating hand sanitizer as soon as she saw the impact of the virus on bigger cities, such as Seattle and New

York City (Lost Coast Outpost). “I was watching the news and was seeing what was happening and thought I’m gonna start making it in bulk so our first responders and delivery people don’t have that problem,” said Hayes. Bubbles has donated to Humboldt CHP, local volunteer fire departments, the Arcata Police Department, local hospitals, post offices, and many other places (Lost Coast Outpost). The members of S.T.I.L. in Eureka have also taken action by producing and donating about 75 gallons of hand sanitizer for the community (Lost Coast Outpost). “On Monday we had a line backed up into Broadway,” said Jason Whitcom of S.T.I.L. Whitcom also explained how other local businesses have contributed to S.T.I.L.’s donations, such as Lithia Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram Fiat of Eureka, who donated 8 gallons of isopropyl alcohol to S.T.I.L. (Lost Coast Outpost). Local businesses such as Bubbles and S.T.I.L. have come together, and sacrificed their supplies to help out the other community members and raise awareness for first-responders and essential workers; despite having their businesses temporarily closed due to the pandemic.

Many non-profit organizations and local businesses have provided their help towards healthcare workers, first-responders, essential workers, and community members by donating goods and providing food and supplies. Feed the E.R., a non-profit organization developed by Eureka local Betsy Totten, has brought food from local restaurants for emergency room healthcare workers to St. Joseph, Redwood Memorial, and Mad River Hospitals in Humboldt County, California. Not only does this organization provide food for healthcare workers,

they also support local restaurants during the pandemic. Other local businesses, such as Bubbles in Arcata, and S.T.I.L. in Eureka have used their supplies to produce and donate gallons of hand sanitizer to first-responders and community members in need. The actions taken by these organizations and businesses can inspire other Humboldt County community members to help out the people in need during this pandemic in a safe, healthy manner. It can also remind us that our local healthcare and essential workers are risking their lives every day to make our community healthy, and that it is important to show our gratitude and give back.

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