

The Jesse Tree – *Connecting, Rebuilding, Uplifting*  
May 18, 2010

On April 16<sup>th</sup>, The Seventh Annual Empty Bowl Event sponsored by The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship was held at The Garten Verein in Galveston, Texas. Over \$20,000 was raised to support the nutrition programs of The Jesse Tree – *and a good time was had by all!*

The Empty Bowl Event is a national movement encouraging local artists and students to use their talents and creativity to address hunger in their own regions. Here in Galveston, Madeleine Baker, President of The Jesse Tree Board of Directors and member of The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship at 502 Church Street in Galveston, initiated the event by teaching a small group (a truly dedicated group too numerous to name, but who have hung in there for seven years!) from her congregation to fashion, fire and glaze the bowls. The group decided to donate the proceeds of the event to support the nutrition programs of The Jesse Tree. George Bowes, Ceramics Instructor at the College of the Mainland and Beth Thomas of Galveston College involved their students to support the event. Each year more participants, artists and volunteers work tirelessly to address hunger by raising funds to support the cause.

Local restaurants donated soups (see the list!) and stations were set-up allowing participants to select a handmade bowl, and then take their bowls from station to station to sample the delicious varieties of soups. Don Clark and David LaBoeuf, local restaurateurs and owners of Miller's Seawall Grill volunteered to decorate, set-up and coordinate the serving of nearly twenty delicious soups donated by local restaurants, including their own. Their expertise resulted in a seemingly effortless event during which patrons could sample the soups, chat with friends, eat delicious breads, enjoy beverages and homemade desserts. The piano music of Valencia Arceneaux with vocal accompaniment by The Jesse Tree's David Mitchell and Lanell York set the tone for a lovely evening, while Ted Hanley, Executive Director strolled the floor playing the accordion given to him by the Board of Directors replacing the one lost in Hurricane Ike.

The Empty Bowl Event is a celebration of ongoing generosity. For example, once involved, Cheryl Hunting, owner of Eatcetera, has continued to donate soup to The Jesse Tree on a regular basis. Everyone connected to this event gives, because they know the needs of The Jesse Tree's clients and they want to help alleviate the pain and suffering in our community. They want Galveston County to be a happier, healthier place to live.

In Galveston County, thousands of individuals live in households described as "food insecure" meaning that their income and ability to access nutritious food is difficult or impossible. In 2009, The Jesse Tree distributed \$12 million worth of fresh fruits and vegetables to over 40,000 Galveston County residents through Food Fairs held in several locations on the mainland, island and peninsula. In addition, participants are enrolled for Food Stamps, WIC, QMB, taught how to manage diabetes and high blood pressure and enrolled in various programs to break the cycles of poverty and illness. In the wake of Hurricane Ike, these populations are more likely to go to bed hungry than any others. Organizations, such as The Jesse Tree have seen a steady increase in numbers of people seeking food as a result of unemployment and the financial burden felt by families after the storm. The Houston Food Bank serves many surrounding counties, including Galveston. They have kept a steady stream of food coming to Galveston's providers, including The Jesse Tree with special accommodations to help after Hurricane Ike. They are to be commended for an incredibly good job and for providing millions of dollars worth of food to Galveston County residents.

Diminishing access to healthcare also has a direct impact on hunger. Each day at one of the various Jesse Tree branches we encounter folks who are battling some chronic medical condition, such as high blood pressure, diabetes or cancer and because they have no health insurance are forced to decide between paying for medicines or food - A tough choice to have to make.

The most inspiring aspect of this entire event is that each participant, artist, chef or donor shared time, talent or treasure for exactly the right reason – to help someone less fortunate. This

extraordinary event is a shining example of Galveston's incredible recovery. We take care of our own! You are not too late! There are still bowls available on the website at [www.jesstree.net](http://www.jesstree.net) or call (409) 762-2233 to see how you can become more involved in the quest to make Galveston County a happier, healthier place to live. Thanks for your time, talent and support.

Seventh Annual Empty Bowl – 2010 Soup Donors:

Benno's - Benno Deltz  
Catering Supplies, ladles, ovens, pans and spoons

Eatcetera - Cheryl Hunting  
Curried Lentil

Lunch Box - Laura Hurt  
Third Coast Chowder

Mario's Seawall - John Smecca  
Chicken Tortellini

Miller's Landing - Don Clark, David LaBoeuf  
Spicy Gumbo, Chicken Enchilada  
Decorations, Printing, Desserts, etc. etc. etc. !!!

Mosquito Café –Patricia and Steve Rennick  
Gazpacho

Olive Garden - John Scott  
Vegetarian Minestrone

The Spot - Jeff  
Potato Soup

Loyce Jardell  
Red Pepper

The ADA House - Ellie Hanley  
Butternut Squash Ginger

Beth Caplan  
Mushroom and Leek

The Jesse Tree - Ted Hanley  
French Onion

Gladys Jenkins  
Beef Vegetable Soup

The Jesse Tree - Darlene Cass, RN  
Red Pepper Garbanzo Bean

Stacey's Catering - Stacey and Marshall Monroe  
Tomato Basil Bisque



A special thank you to Michael A. Elam, Ed.D., President of the College of the Mainland, Ceramics Students and Volunteers who helped make the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Empty Bowl Event a tremendous success.



Special thanks to Madeleine Baker and Pat Patterson and all the volunteers of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship who made The Seventh Annual Empty Bowl Event a success.



Special thanks to Steve and Patricia Rennick of The Mosquito Café and all the generous Restaurateurs who generously supported The Seventh Annual Empty Bowl Event.