

Get ?bowled over? to help community members in need with Pine Tree Potters Guild

As the holiday season approaches, it's time to think about ways to help community members who might need a hand ? and members of Aurora's Pine Tree Potters Guild are stepping up to the plate, or bowl, to take out a lot of the guesswork.

The Guild, which is based out of the Aurora Public Library, is set to host their 16th annual Empty Bowls Fundraiser on Thursday, November 20.

Set to be held at Newmarket's Old Town Hall, the Empty Bowls event brings together more than a dozen local restaurants serving up a variety of gourmet soups to ticketholders, each of whom is able to select a handmade bowl, crafted by the Guild, to take home with them.

Proceeds benefit Aurora's Welcoming Arms and Newmarket's Inn from the Cold, both of which provide vital supports to neighbours in need.

Although tickets for the meal itself sold out within 48 hours of going on sale, there are still opportunities to secure your bowl ? and lend your support to the two organizations.

Empty Bowls is held in conjunction with the Guild's annual Fall Sale and from Friday, November 21 through Sunday, November 23, members of the public are invited to come to their ?Empty Bowl Room? to buy a bowl or two of their own.

?We have close to 550 bowls made already and we're still not done yet, so it's really great,? says Guild member and Empty Bowls chair Lisa-Marie Oliphant. ?We have a lot of new members in the Guild and this is going to be their first exposure to what Empty Bowls is all about and what we've been doing all these years.

?We sold out in less than two days this year, which is pretty wild ? it's just so popular ? and we're making that money for the charities we're donating to, Welcoming Arms and Inn from the Cold.?

Since the event's inception, Oliphant notes the event has raised nearly \$286,000 for the two non-profits.

?This year, with all of the tickets already sold, we know we're going to have a big donation, but the selling of the bowls on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday opens up awareness to anyone who is coming to the sale from far and wide.?

As they head towards what's already a successful 2025 event, Oliphant says the event endures year over year because it's all about community.

?We are very privileged to be able to purchase these tickets, and it's not lost on us that we do this because it is helping those in need who struggle with food security,? she says. ?Sadly, the need has never gone away and it's never been more present. We do this because we know it is so needed and the community knows it's so needed. I think that's why people come in droves to try and get tickets. They know we're doing this for the communities and families all across York Region who come into Inn from the Cold and come into Welcoming Arms for the assistance that they need.?

Bowls in the separate sale are \$40 each and organizers promise a different array of bowls will be on sale each day ? both hand-painted and carved.

?We advise people that when you're in the room and you see a bowl that you like, pick it up because if you don't there's heartbreak. Whatever your style choices ? if you like vibrant, it's there. Like monochrome? Easy, that's there! There's so many choices,? she adds.

?We thank the community for continuing to support this fundraiser and supporting us as potters and artists who love to do this and bring our creativity to it. We could not do this without our community. That's the reason why this is such a success and we look forward to seeing so many people come in to learn about what Empty Bowls does for Inn from the Cold and Welcoming Arms.?

For more information about this year's event, visit www.pinetreepotters.ca/empty-bowls-event-this-year.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter