Information Technology Staff Pull Together for Amazing Fundraising Effort

Renowned anthropologist Margaret Meade said “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world.”

The staff of Information Technology Department (ITD) may not have had this quote in mind last month, but they certainly showed that by working together, they could impact the lives of hundreds of people in Monterey County. In just one week, the ITD team raised more than $1,400 for the Food Bank for Monterey County.

It all began last month at the ITD All-Hands Meeting. Lee Hulquist, Programs Manager of the Food Bank for Monterey County, was invited to speak and described the extent of the hunger problem here in Monterey County. During the presentation, Lee explained how the Food Bank leverages its donations, turning each dollar in cash donations into five dollars of food purchased.

That struck a chord with ITD staff.
“After listening to this talk, our entire team decided to do something more than just fill donation food barrels to assist those in need,” explains Mike Gross, Enterprise Division Manager. “Over the next four days, the team donated $1,442 in cash to be used by the Food Bank to purchase foods to help fill pantry shelves.”

How did this department do such an outstanding job of fundraising in just four days? Determination, a challenge and technology of course!

It all started with an email. Mike Gross and Department Director Dianah Neff sparked the giving campaign with an email challenge, pledging to match up to $150.00 in donations. Once donations began coming in, Mike sent out updates each afternoon to spur on giving. As the donation approached the goal of $1,000, several employees stepped in with very sizeable donations to take it over that mark. But the giving didn’t stop there. Donations kept coming until the final total of $1,442 was reached.

Imagine the surprise when the Food Bank representative was called back four days after her talk to receive a big donation! Thanks to these employees, the Food Bank will be able to purchase more than $7,200 worth of food which will help to feed the needy this holiday season.

Employee Scholarship Fund Gets ‘Cooking’

The Monterey County Employee Scholarship Fund cookbook is here, just in time to find that perfect dish for a holiday get together or to give as a special gift.

You’ll recall that earlier this year, organizers invited recipe submissions from county staff. Now you can see ‘what’s cookin’ in the kitchens of your colleagues by buying the
book. There is even a special recipe submission and note congratulating the scholarship program from Gloria Spriggs, the winner of the 2013 Pillsbury Bake-Off Million Dollar Recipe Challenge, who shared how to make her winning dish - it’s a recipe you won’t find anywhere else!

The spiral-bound book “From Our Kitchen to Yours” contains recipes submitted by Monterey County employees. Each cookbook costs $10.00 plus tax, and all proceeds support the Monterey County Employees Scholarship Fund. Order forms are online on the Monterey County Employee Scholarship website. Quantities are limited.

If there are any cookbooks left, there will be a cookbook sale table in the Government Center during the week of December 15th. For more information, call Susanne King at x6072.

Rainy Weather Safe Driving Tips

With rainy weather back in our forecast, it’s a good time to review rainy weather driving tips. The folks at the Transportation Agency for Monterey County are sharing these tips from Smart Motorist, a non-profit automobile safety organization.

• First and foremost - slow down! It takes longer to stop or adjust in wet weather.
• Stay toward the middle lanes - did you know water tends to pool in the outside lanes?
• Always maintain proper following distance (3 Second Rule), but allow more room during wet weather.
• Drive in the tracks of a car ahead of you.
• Don't follow large trucks or buses too closely. The spray created by their large tires reduces your vision.
• Be more alert.
• Avoid using your brakes; if possible, take your foot off the accelerator to slow down.
- Turn on your headlights in light rain, gloomy, foggy or overcast conditions. Not only do they help you see the road, but they'll help other drivers see you.
- Replace old or brittle wipers once a year.

- Never drive beyond the limits of visibility.
- Never drive through moving water if you can't see the ground through it.
- When driving through a puddle of uncertain depth, go slow. If it's deeper than the bottom of your doors, turn around and find another route. Deep water can cause serious damage to a car's electrical system.
- If possible, stay off the road during heavy thunderstorms. Large flashes of lightning can temporarily blind and disorient drivers, and the accompanying high winds and heavy rain can create deadly driving conditions.

- Make sure the soles of your shoes are dry to prevent slipping off pedals.
- Make sure tires are in good condition. Bald tires reduce traction and place you in danger of hydroplaning.
- Watch out for oily deposits on the road. The rain blends with oil and rubber-dust deposits on the road surface to form a highly dangerous skid mixture.

- If you find yourself in a skid, remain calm. Ease your foot off the gas and carefully steer in the direction you want the front of the car to go. This procedure, known as ‘steering into the skid,’ will bring the back end of your car in line with the front. For cars without anti-lock brakes, avoid using your brakes. If your car has ABS, brake firmly as you steer into the skid.