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FEEDHV AND RED HOOK RESPONDS COLLABORATE FOR SECOND ANNUAL FOOD RESCUE AT THE DUTCHESS COUNTY FAIR

Over 670 Pounds of Donations From Fair Vendors Headed to Area Food Assistance Programs

HUDSON, NY --- September 12, 2023 --- Amid the flurry of activity as the Dutchess County Fair closed on Sunday night August 27, a team of volunteers from Red Hook Responds fanned out across the fairgrounds to collect excess food products from vendors. This was the second annual collaboration between Red Hook Responds and FeedHV to collect viable but unserved food products for distribution to agencies with food assistance programs.

Working until around 10:00 pm that night, the volunteers circulated with coolers, and loaded the trays and bags into a trailer which headed back to the cold storage at Red Hook Responds, and then for distribution to agencies. The group collected over 670 pounds of a variety of food products.

Administered by Hudson Valley AgriBusiness Development Corporation (HVADC), FeedHV is a regional food rescue and harvesting network operating throughout Dutchess, Orange, Ulster, Columbia, Greene, Putnam and Sullivan counties. It links donors of prepared, but unserved, food and fresh produce with nonprofits and food assistance programs. Through an app-assisted network of food donors, volunteers and feeding agencies, FeedHV facilitates the harvesting, processing and distribution of locally grown or produced agricultural products, shelf-stable food donations and prepared nutritious foods. Among the donors are restaurants, farms, food makers, stores, hotels, institutions and universities – and now the Dutchess County Fair. The food assistance programs include food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters.

At the conclusion of the Fair, 11 Red Hook Responds/FeedHV volunteers spread out across the fairgrounds to collect excess food products from vendors who had previously been canvassed earlier in the week and indicated that they may have donations.

“Building off last year’s collection, we received a nice reception from the food vendors when we canvassed them, and who were well aware of the end-of-Fair rescue,” said Jeung-il Tsumagari, former Executive Director, Red Hook Responds, who acted as the FeedHV coordinator this year. “It’s hard to gauge what the true donations will be at the end of an event such as the Fair, since the vendors’ inventories are affected by so many factors, including weather and attendance. We were very pleased to be able to collect slightly more than we did in 2022,” she continued.

In all, 16 vendors made donations, which included various produce (lettuce, corn, potatoes, garlic, scallions, cucumbers, lemons, carrots, celery, tomatoes, onions, peppers, broccoli), prepared food such as rice and beans, chili, pizza, vegetables, and empanadas; various breads and rolls, deserts, cheese, dressings, condiments, macaroni salad, coleslaw, and cooked meats such as beef, chicken, Gyro meat, and sausages.

“The success of the event is a testament to the good people of Northern Dutchess, from the Dutchess County Fair staff and vendors, to the volunteers from Red Hook Responds. This type of food rescue event requires coordination, dedication and a commitment to save food for those in need. We cannot thank all who participated enough for the work they did as the fair ended, and made this our second success with the Fair,” said Mary Ann Johnson, Deputy Director of HVADC.

Back at Red Hook Responds, the donations were being organized for distribution, and in the coming days, FeedHV volunteers also transported items to its receiving agencies, including to Hope on a Mission and Hudson River Housing in Poughkeepsie; and Peoples Place, Darmstadt Shelter and Seasoned Gives in Kingston.

Volunteering for the Red Hook Responds teams was a family affair, much as it was in 2022. Among the crew were three generations of the Beck family returning for their second time volunteering at the event, and Tim and Madison Curry who joined the team this year.

“I am so pleased that we were able to once again work with FeedHV and get product to the Hudson Valley food banks and people who can use it. We have had other Fairs pick up on the idea and are pleased to part of this grass roots effort. It is truly a testimony to teamwork! It could not be accomplished without the dedicated people involved, from the organizers, to the collectors, to the very Fair vendors themselves,” said Deborah Aschmann, Concessions, Vendors & Partnerships, for the Dutchess Country Fair.

This year’s Dutchess County Fair featured approximately 100 food vendors across the fairgrounds, including the Grange, 4H and Midway areas. However, many are not suited to participate in a FeedHV collection, such as those whose primary business is to serve alcoholic beverages or frozen or other confections.

To learn more about FeedHV, its donor and volunteer programs, visit www.feedhv.org. To become a food donor, contact info@feedhv.org. To make a monetary donation to FeedHV, visit <https://www.feedhv.org/donate-today>.

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About FeedHV

For the past six years, FeedHV has been operating as a regional food rescue and harvesting network in New York’s Hudson Valley, linking donors of prepared but unserved food and fresh produce to nonprofits with food assistance programs. The program is administered by Hudson Valley AgriBusiness Development Corporation (HVADC). For additional information, visit www.feedhv.org.

About Red Hook Responds

Red Hook Responds coordinates, enhances and supports the existing and new volunteer efforts in the Red Hook area. It harnesses volunteers in a centralized location where people work together to maximize the programs already in place. Among

its many food assistance program, it operates a food exchange, connecting local farms with pantries, processes food for distribution to agencies, operates Red Hook Eats, a dinner delivery service for its neighbors and offers a pantry bag program for those in need. www.redhookresponds.org.

About The Dutchess County Fair

The Fair is produced by the Dutchess County Agricultural Society Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to showcase, promote and sustain agriculture through education, display, competition and community involvement. Its vision is a society actively engaged in the pursuit and promotion of our rural and agricultural heritage, from neighborhood back yards to family farms and commercial enterprises. Today, the largest agricultural 6-day fair in New York State has a physical plant that is recognized as one of the most beautiful in the country. 2023 marks the 177th Dutchess County Fair, featured over 1,000 individual exhibitors showcasing everything from cows, horses, pigs, chickens, sheep, and goats to jams, jellies, quilts and fine arts for the Dutchess County Fair. www.dutchessfair.com