

## LOCAL NEWS

# Banning man helps Carol's Kitchen to continue mission

BY JULIE FARREN  
Record Gazette

Carol's Kitchen has received a very generous donation that will help feed the hungry in the San Geronio Pass for quite some time.

Dick Taylor, a resident of Sun Lakes for 22 years, presented a check on Thursday morning, May 30, to Arlene Ragan, who founded the non-profit organization 15 years ago with her husband, Jim Ragan.

The organization is named for their daughter, Carol Ragan, who died in a motorcycle accident in 1996. Carol always gave from her heart to the homeless and hungry and the Ragans' wanted to honor her by starting the non-profit organization in 1998.

The first meal was served on April 21, 1998, in Banning. Initially, Carol's Kitchen was serving more than 30 meals. In the past 15 years, the organization has served more than 500,000 meals in Banning, Beaumont and Cabazon.

Every anniversary, on April 21, they serve a chicken enchilada casserole, which was Carol's favorite.

Taylor said he wanted to help the organization and honor his late wife, Helen, at the same time.

"They've done so much good in this community, providing food for people who need it," said Taylor.

Helen Taylor died in May



Arlene Ragan, co-founder of Carol's Kitchen, accepts a check from Sun Lakes resident Dick Taylor, who made a very generous donation to the non-profit organization that feeds the hungry in the San Geronio Pass. Taylor

2012.

He also noted that many Carol's Kitchen volunteers live in Sun Lakes.

This is not the first time he has donated money for a good cause. Approximately five years ago, Taylor set up a trust for scholarships at California State University, San Bernardino.

That trust was established in honor of his first wife, Bernadine Taylor, who died in 1995. She graduated from California State University, San Bernardino, with a Bachelor of Arts and an M.B.A.

"She loved that school,"

said Taylor.

He spoke with Arlene Ragan about a month ago about making the donation. Taylor said she was very happy about his generous gift.

"I think she realized how much it will help them to continue doing what they're doing," he said.

Arlene Ragan agreed.

She said that the organization serves approximately 1,300 meals a week at three locations in Banning, Beaumont and Cabazon. Each site provides meals twice a week on alternating days.

Ragan and her husband, Jim, who died in November 2011, had taken a five-year absence from the organization before becoming involved again that year.

She said that Banning is

the busiest site. "We're serving big plates and they're coming back for seconds or thirds," she said.

The volunteers and Ragan are noticing a lot more younger people showing up for meals. Ragan knows that they are providing a needed service for the hungry.

"Every county needs these places to help people out," said Ragan.

Carol's Kitchen receives donated food from Albertson's and Perricone Juices, along with produce.

It costs approximately \$4,200 a month to operate Carol's Kitchen, said Ragan. When they have to pay insurance, it's about \$3,000 a month more, said Ragan.

They also have to pay rent in Banning and Beaumont, along with gasoline for the

delivery truck and kitchen expenses.

Ragan said that everyone works really hard at Carol's Kitchen.

"I'm really proud of what we've able to do since 2011," said Ragan.

Carol's Kitchen serves meals from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mondays and Thursdays at Saint Kateri Tekakwitha Catholic Church, 1234 Palm Ave. in Beaumont; 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Mondays and Thursdays at Cabazon Community Center, 50390 Carmen Ave. in Cabazon; 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesdays and Fridays at Banning Community Center, 789 N. San Geronio Ave. in Banning.

Anyone wishing to make a monetary donation can do so by cash, checks or online donations using a credit card or PayPal.

Cash or check donations are accepted during kitchen hours. Checks may be addressed to Carol's Kitchen and sent by mail to: Carol's Kitchen, P.O. Box 364, Calimesa, CA 92320.

Two fundraisers are being held this summer to benefit Carol's Kitchen.

The first is a car show from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. July 20 at Top-Line Industrial Supply, 101 California Ave. in Beaumont. There will be food and drinks available. The event is free. Car entries are \$15 each. All cars are welcome to register. Call Sam Baldi at (951) 769-9665.

The second event is a bowling tournament at 10 a.m. Aug. 17 at Canyon Lanes at Morongo Casino.

Check-in starts at 9 a.m. Cost is \$35 per person and includes cost of ball and shoe rental. Must be 13 and older to participate.

There will be prizes and trophies for highest scores and runners-up for men and women in the League Bowler Division and the Non-League Bowler Division. Entries are limited.

Payment must be received by Aug. 1.

Call Ed Barba at (951) 849-6077 for information on the bowling tournament or general information about Carol's Kitchen.