

EMPTY BOWLS FILLED WITH KINDNESS

Twelve years ago, Bev Rose, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte High School art teacher, presented an idea to her advanced Art Class. She had been reading about a project known as “Empty Bowls”, in which ceramic artists created bowls as a community service project.

Rose asked her class what they thought about doing this project for the Eagle Butte community. The students embraced the idea and the class worked hard to meet a goal of 100 bowls for the project. The class created wheel thrown bowls and taught 2nd graders how to make pinch bowls for the event.

The class wrote a short article for the paper, and made a soup supper where people could come pick out a bowl and have a meal for a donation of \$5.00. The community response was great.

Right at that time, a family in the community lost everything in a fire and the students asked Rose if they could donate the proceeds to the family to help them with food and clothing, which marked the beginning of the “Empty Bowls” project at Cheyenne-Eagle Butte High School.

Since then the project has grown into a celebrated community event. The soup supper quickly out grew the locker area in which it was previously held and was moved into the lobby of the gymnasium, which only lasted a few years before it was moved into the gym.

One year, so many people showed up that Rose and her students knew they would be quickly out of soup and food. Surprisingly, almost on cue, people started showing up with pots of soup and fry bread, resulting in plenty of food to go around.

The event gives art students a way to make a personal difference with their art.

“This was very heartwarming and encouraging for the students to feel so much support from the community,” Eagle Butte School Board Member Tina Neigel said.



In recent years, a silent art auction and art show has been added to the “Empty Bowls” soup supper event. Art created by high school students is on display in the gym. Community members bid on art created by students

and staff and this money is also donated to the cause.

Student organizations, such as Student Council and National Honor Society, also contribute to the community service project. Community members continue to donate soup and other food for the supper and the goal for this year’s Ceramics class is to create 350 bowls.

The benefits of the “Empty Bowls” project have been greater than ever expected by Rose. Students gain skills and confidence with each bowl they make. Their efforts bring the community together for an evening of fun and giving from the heart.

Throughout the years the students have been able to raise over \$20,000 to help out those in need in our community.

“My family and I will forever be grateful for (the school) and (the) students hosting Empty Bowls for my son,” Stancee Moran Cottier, who’s newborn son faced medical issues and the family the stress of paying the bills, said. “It lifted a huge financial burden from our shoulders and lightened a load we were already facing. The money raised from Empty Bowls helped us focus on our son.”

“It also showed us how great of a community Eagle Butte is and that we really weren’t in this alone. The art and pottery done by the students was amazing along with the food that was brought by numerous people from around town and surrounding areas. The support was amazing and continues to be!”

