

There are multiple ways for locals and visitors to participate. The first is to make a donation to United Way through the campaign. Donors will receive a \$5 coupon for every \$25 they donate. The coupon can be used for a local restaurant. Restaurants will be reimbursed by United Way for each coupon so they bear no financial burden, Holen said.

Patrons can also enter two contests. First, people can post a picture from local restaurants to Instagram with the hashtag #dineuniteduwc for a chance to win prizes from local restaurants. Additionally, people can enter a free drawing by visiting any participating restaurant and scanning a QR code on the event poster. The drawings occur each Thursday through the end of the campaign.

United Way purchased gift certificates that serve as prizes for the drawings, so the restaurants “aren’t out anything,” Holen said. She said her hope for the campaign is that it “will drive business for dine-in or takeout, wherever someone’s comfort level is.”

An Iron Chef substitute

The concept for the campaign derived partially from United Way’s annual event, Iron Chef Goes Coastal. Last year, United Way raised more than \$100,000 from Iron Chef. The event was canceled this year because the coronavirus.

United Way relies on funds raised at the event to distribute among 14 local agencies it supports, including Clatsop Community Action, Helping Hands, Clatsop Court Appointed Special Advocates programs and The Harbor.

This year, funding is especially critical, Holen said, because many agencies have needed to adapt to continue providing services during the pandemic. Organizations have lost support and money that would have normally been raised through fundraisers earlier this year. Most fundraisers were either canceled or didn’t yield the same level of funding as previous years.

At the same time, many agencies are facing greater demand for services to help with issues like food insecurity, lack of housing, difficulty paying rent and unemployment.

“Our agencies continue to fight really hard for the people in our community to help them bridge the gap,” Holen said. “They’ve done an amazing job keeping hope alive for people.”

Keeping money local

All money raised by United Way of Clatsop County remains in the community, Holen said.



Silver Salmon Grille is participating in United Way of Clatsop County’s DINE UNITED campaign. Pictured is chef and owner Jeff Martin.

“We need our money to stay here more than ever, ever before,” Holen said.

Agencies can also leverage the money they receive from United Way to acquire additional funds.

Holen doesn’t expect the campaign to fully compensate for what would’ve likely

been raised at Iron Chef Goes Coastal. She hopes to raise about \$25,000, which will still help the community and supplement the state and federal relief funds some agencies have received.

Funds will also help restaurants, which voluntarily supported United Way for sev-

eral years by contributing food, services, gift certificates and other in-kind donations for the Iron Chef event.

“Now they’re just fighting to stay alive,” Holen said, adding she hopes the campaign will also “raise awareness for this part of our community that needs our help.”

Katherine Lacaze