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Friends of the FEC seeks donations, vendors for Indoor Yard Sale

Trying to figure out what to do with those items piling up in your spare bedroom and garage? You know, the ones that are way too good to throw away but that are taking up way too much space? Donate them to the Friends of the Florence Events Center Indoor Yard Sale scheduled for Saturday, Aug. 4.

The Friends use proceeds from the sale of your donations for much-needed projects and improvements at the event center, the gem of Florence. Donations may be dropped off at Florence Events Center, 715 Quince St., during normal business hours.

Alternatively, you can become a yard sale vendor by purchasing a booth.

If you are a nonprofit organization, a single booth costs only \$35; the price is \$45 if you are an individual or a nonprofit organization.

For complete information, call the event center at 541-997-1994 or go online to www.eventcenter.org and click on the Indoor Yard Sale icon.

The online application is located there, or you can pick one up at the Florence Events Center.

Applications are being accepted now and are expected to sell out.

FOOD SHARE from page 1A

Florence Food Share has had a bit of a rollercoaster ride during the last year, capped by Barton's exit and the hiring of Montes.

Last summer, an upgrade to the facility provided necessary additional space to serve clients and to prepare food for distribution. The workspaces for staff were also improved, making the physical layout of the building more user friendly. These modest renovations were paid for by a combination of a grant coupled with community donations.

Unfortunately, public perception was such that since construction and renovations were underway at the food share, its financial situation was secure — which proved to be inaccurate.

The money received for structural improvements was dedicated for that purpose, and other uses for those funds were restricted. Operating expenses were not part of that grant and the bills were piling

up at the end of last year, with only a small reserve fund on hand to pay the outstanding debts.

This led to a fiscal shortfall at the end of 2017 that nearly terminated organizational operations due to lack of money, which necessitated a direct request to the community for aid in order to remain in operation.

The response to the request for assistance was positive and Florence Food Share received a number of significant donations, in addition to many smaller amounts, which averted a forced closure. It also received a substantial financial commitment from local business Top Hydraulics to support the food pantry for 2018.

Florence Food Share still needs to receive donations or funding for the operational expenses it incurs every month. However, the organization does not have to worry about paying rent, as the New Life Lutheran Church has for many years essentially donated the buildings and land used for the Food Share Garden. This donation allows the nonprofit to focus on obtaining the ancillary funding it needs to operate the pantry and to pay its small staff.

"My first priority is to reach out to our donors and community partners in order to make a difference through community outreach and education, in partnership with other organizations, to minimize hunger and develop successful programs that have a significant impact in our community," Montes said.

This is the work that Montes is going to focus on in the next few months, with additional attention going to encouraging some of the more active donors and volunteers to consider a long-term endowment or legacy donation. Support of this kind could help ensure the future for an organization that has helped thousands of Florence area residents over the past 30 years.

When asked what was most needed by the organization at this time, Montes said, "We are always in need of volunteers. If it wasn't for the hard work and dedication of our team of volunteers, we would not be able reach our goal to alleviate hunger."

For more information about Florence Food Share, visit www.florencefoodshare.org or call 541-997-9110.

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