

Shirts from **A1** COVID-19 pandemic bring economic hardship to the area. Cottage Grove businesses have reported losses as high as 61 percent during the crisis and the cancellation of social events such as Bohemia Mining Days and class reunions has exacerbated an already low tourism rate.

Murai found that a T-shirt campaign in Beaverton had met with some success and she has since worked with the regional company HYVÄ to produce the Cottage Grove shirts. Though HYVÄ has recommended a goal of 20,000 shirts in sales, Cottage Grove's small population is unlikely to reach that bar. Even so, Murai said the spirit of solidarity will be worth the investment.

"It really creates unity. That's one thing I've noticed about Cottage Grove — they're really tied together and people really care and they show that they care," she said. "So, I think it's a really great project to bring people together."

Even in talking with businesses which are hurting financially, Murai noted that many are optimistic when discussing their outlook. In that, she hopes to spread the message that a strong community can work together to overcome obstacles.

"It won't make up for all the money that they've lost, but it's mostly just an effort to create unity within the community," she said. "And the importance of shopping local."

In a few months, Murai said businesses can likely make wholesale purchases of the T-shirts and sell them in their stores.

The pre-shrunk fabric shirts are described on the website as "soft and lightweight, with the right amount of stretch," and are selling for \$25 each.

They are currently available for online order at hyva.co/good-shirts/cottage-grove.



COURTESY PHOTO

Friends of the Cottage Grove Carousel's Annual Rummage Sale
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New T-shirts offered through the Main Street Program help support local businesses in Cottage Grove.

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