KNP delivers a lucky dinner

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InterTown News Service

NEW LONDON – The Kearsarge Neighborhood Partners (KNP) delivered a pot of gold in the form of a traditional St. Patrick’s Day dinner to 142 residents in the Kearsarge region early Saturday evening on March 20.

The KNP joined forces with the masons of the King Solomon Lodge 14, Free and Accepted Masons in Enfield, purchasing the food for the dinners. The masons did the cooking, which began on Saturday at 5:45 a.m.

“The masons are good at cooking and the KNP is good at delivering,” said Howard Hoke, lodge chaplain.

“We love partnering with them and they are great to work with.”

Some of the money collected for the meals will cover food costs for the masonic lodge. The masons will donate the remainder of the funds to a local charity.

“We want to be a supporter of groups in town,” Hoke said. “We raise money for public charitable purposes and spend it on charitable causes.”

The St. Patrick’s Day dinner idea was the result of discussions between the KNP and masons, with a previous collaboration for 30 meals at Thanksgiving in 2020.

“It is very rewarding to see service organizations working together,” said Greta Roberts, board member.

“Seeing how generous people are in the region is extremely rewarding.”

Established in 2020, the volunteer-based KNP, connects people to resources to help them with a particular need or if they are struggling through a challenging time. Volunteers most suited are paired with an individual or family to attend to their needs, even if it is simply being a phone buddy. There are 190 volunteers at this time.

Their mission statement reads in part, “KNP is a New Hampshire nonprofit organization dedicated to building a community where neighbors help each other to flourish.”

The needs in the community increased during the past year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We like to be a good part of the community who connect recipients to the right resources,” Roberts said. “The KNP is a chain in the community.”

Some of the services they offer are navigating local and federal support services, delivering prepared meals, wood for heating, arranging help with food insecurity, wellness check phone calls, help with small outdoor repairs and light yard work and more.

“Volunteers are very giving with their time,” Roberts said. “No politics involved in goals, it’s about how can we help a person or a family.”

The KNP upholds certain principles and believes in embracing the transforming power of love and compassion. They recognize the value of reciprocity in relationships, seeking opportunities for those who have been served to join the cause in building community.

“It is wonderful watching people connect and all the friends people are making,” said Steve Allenby, president of the KNP board. “I think the biggest measure of the success is how people have connected.”

“It’s really cool and meaningful to see,” he added.

The plan to deliver the St. Patrick’s Day dinner was well organized, with volunteers meeting at the Enfield post office, across from King Solomon’s Lodge so as to not cause traffic congestion.

The majority of them waited for the loaded vehicles from the volunteers who were picking up the meals at the lodge. They packed their cars and drove off to distribute the meals in the area.

“It’s wonderful and it shows great community appreciation,” said Mariann Cahill, appearing at the door in a “Lack of the Irish” jersey. “This is something that brings people together.”

Her 4-year-old son Joseph poked his head out at his mother’s side, anxious to see what had arrived. A few of their family members are involved in the masons.

“We hope there will be other opportunities to work with the KNP again in the future,” Hoke said. “It is a developing partnership.”

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