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Kaylee Motherdol, 12, left, and Adi Wolfenden, 11, fill handmade bowls with soup as lunch is served to the needy at the Family Kitchen at Bend's Trinity Episcopal Church. Students at Rimrock Expeditionary Alternative Learning Middle School and Waldorf School of Bend not only volunteer at the kitchen, but also make the ceramic bowls some of the food is served in.

Rob Kerr / The Bulletin

Bowls are included

Local middle schoolers are helping feed the hungry – and they're even providing the bowls

By [Diane S.W. Lee](#) / *The Bulletin*

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SUPER BOWLS

The brown and blue pin-striped soup bowl brightened Angela McDonald's day.

“They are all different designs,” she said, admiring the handmade ceramic bowl in front of her. “They're cute, because someone who made it cared.”

The bowl is one of 35 handmade creations by middle school students who spend a couple of hours a week crafting bowls in an elective art class. The students volunteer at Trinity Episcopal Church in Bend to prepare and serve food — some of it in bowls they made — to hungry Family Kitchen visitors.

Service Fridays project

It's all part of a service learning project, Service Fridays, in which students at Rimrock Expeditionary Alternative Learning Middle School and Waldorf School of Bend select an organization at which to volunteer. Students aren't graded on their work but will write reflections each week about their experiences.

Family Kitchen's team leader Dusty Kitchingham said it is great to watch students interact with guests. “I enjoy having them here,” he said. “I think it adds so much to their personality. The fact that these kids may come from a different place in life than the people that we serve ... because it hasn't been that many years since I was on the streets, so I know what it's like.”

Students spend two hours in class every Friday afternoon molding clay, shaping it into bowls, firing the bowls and then painting them. They spend an estimated 16 hours in class making bowls for eight weeks. Since Feb. 3, they have donated about 35 colorful handmade bowls to the kitchen. By two weeks from now, they plan to have donated nearly 100 handmade bowls.

In addition to bowl-making, the students spend three hours each Wednesday morning preparing and serving sandwiches, salads and soup. They spend a total of eight hours serving food at Family Kitchen. Their final service day at the kitchen is today.

Amy Anderson, service learning coordinator at REALMS, said the project is meant to teach the students a lesson.

“I hope that they come away from this experience, and being in the Family Kitchen, to see that people sometimes need help for longer periods of time or sometimes they just need a hot lunch,” Anderson said. “Although often I think Bend presents this really affluent community, we have a huge group of folks in this community living in poverty, and I think the Family Kitchen proves a lens into that world.”

The students benefit...

Shahalee Davis, a sixth-grader at REALMS, said she decided to volunteer at Family Kitchen for that reason. “I wanted to see what kind of people that we were going to be serving,” said Davis, 11.

Davis also wanted to make bowls because she had never molded clay bowls with her hands before. “You can make them however you want, and you have freedom to do what you want with the bowls,” she said, “how you shape them and how you color them. I love to be creative.”

Shahalee said she felt OK parting with her creation “because I know it's going for a good cause,” she said.

But REALMS eighth-grader Will Griffiths, 13, said it was difficult to part with his first handmade ceramic bowl because he really liked it. A guest at the Family Kitchen liked his creation, too, so that guest took it home.

“But I was happy about it because someone was taking my bowl saying, ‘This is a good bowl. I wanna keep it,’” Will said.

“We're actually hoping the bowls will live here at the Family Kitchen and be used in consecutive meal services,” Anderson said. “For lunch they always serve soup, so we thought it would be really nice to have some beautiful bowls for the folks to eat from.”

... *and so do others*

McDonald took a break from eating the sandwich on her plate and admired the soup bowl in front of her. “All those nice ones should stay here,” she said. “That's what they were made for. They should stay.”

Times have been tough for McDonald, who visits Family Kitchen once a week. She said she has been unemployed for about a year. The kitchen makes life easier. “I have couple of teenagers, and we live in a motel,” she said. “I'll come in here and eat lunch, and it makes things stretch further for my kids.”

She said it means a lot to know there are still people who care. “I just think it's a great thing — especially for kids to do it — kids that actually have heart,” she said. “For a group of kids to get together to decide they want to feed the hungry — that's pretty cool.”

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