

The Observer

Souper fundraiser

Georgette Parsons doesn't give up easily.

When a part of her pottery wheel went crashing to the floor in front of dozens Tuesday at Lambton College, the rookie potter picked it up and started again.

By the time she was done, the past president of the Sexual Assault Survivors' Centre had crafted her very first soup bowl.

"The fact that I turned this out, I'm very pleased because it flew across the floor first," Parsons said, admiring her handiwork drying on a table.

Rookie and veteran potters alike gathered at the college for the annual Celebrity Bowl-a-Thon. For police officers, social services workers and others in attendance, throwing slabs of clay onto a wheel isn't usually in a day's work.

Every year ceramics instructor Beth Turnbull Morrish is impressed by participants' efforts.

"I think part of the fun is just trying it," she said, "getting these people who are excellent in the fields they work in to try something that maybe they don't have any experience or skill at it at first."

These celebrity bowls will be up grabs in a silent auction at the fifth annual Empty Bowls fundraiser March 16.

Diners are invited to feast on a simple meal of soup and bread donated by local restaurants and served in handmade bowls to take home. Proceeds benefit the Inn of the Good Shepherd and the Lambton College Food Bank.

Ceramics departments across the world participate in Empty Bowls fundraisers, Turnbull Morrish said. Local potters, ceramics staff and students will craft the 400 bowls needed for the Sarnia event.

Elizabeth Martiniuk, of the Sarnia Lambton Potters' Guild, helped Mary McLeay, of the Rotary Club of Sarnia, behind the potter's wheel Tuesday. Martiniuk, who taught at the college for 25 years, was equally impressed by the participants.

"I'm always surprised because I had an awful struggle when I first started," she said.

Tom Marshall, of Sarnia Fire Rescue Services, quickly whipped up his first bowl with ease. He's participated in the Celebrity Bowl-a-Thon for three years.

"I think it's the best bowl I've ever done," he said, picking out the glaze for his work of art.

Seatings March 16 are at 5 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at the Lambton Inn ballroom, where live entertainment will be provided by the Sisters of Soul.

Tickets are \$25 and available at the Inn of the Good Shepherd, Lambton College's counselling department and from members of the Sarnia Lambton Potters' Guild.

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