

Cinco de Mayo: Celebrating victories large and small



Bob Palucha on mandolin and Teresita Juarez Lyon and Francisco Lovato on guitar practice for a Cinco de Mayo concert to be held for guests at Hospitality House. Lyon is the owner of the business, Teresita Haute Tamales. She will cook for 50 people at the homeless center Monday.

Nine years ago, someone close to Teresita Juarez Lyon was homeless. That's when she discovered Hospitality House.

She became involved in those formative days of the group but had to step away for several years to take care of her ill mother.

Monday, Lyon will return to Hospitality House to make tamales for 50 guests and perform traditional Mexican music in celebration of Cinco de Mayo.

"This is a way for me to contribute and become involved again. I feel a commitment to their cause and I admire Utah Phillips' goals and dedication," she said.

Lyon will make 60-70 tamales, rice, beans, salad and dessert. This event is a gift to the guests of Hospitality House and is not open to the public. The dinner takes place at the close of Transitions Day, part of a program known as Pathways to Housing at Hospitality House.

From 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, guests will be treated to fashion makeovers, massages, haircuts and styling, quality clothes and grooming kits.

"A good first impression is vital for our guests when they go out on job and housing interviews," said Hospitality House Executive Director Cindy Maple.

That night, Lyon will be joined by musicians: Bob Polucha on mandolin, Eah Herren on harp and Francisco Lovato on guitar. The band will play popular Mexican tunes like Cielito Lindo, La Cucaracha, Guantanamera and La Bamba.

"I would love to encourage others in the community to donate their talents, expertise, skills, and time to Hospitality House. There are many ways to help," she said.

Lyon is the owner of Teresita's Haute Tamales. She began selling her tamales at street fairs, some benefits and through direct seasonal sales. Now her tamales can be found at area retailers.

Her vegetarian tamales, made using the traditional hand rolled method, are a combination of green chilies, tomatoes, zucchini, cheese and olives with masa. A vegan version of this tamale contains mushrooms in place of cheese. She is working on another vegan tamale with Middle Eastern spices, potatoes, peas and tomatoes. A chocolate variety will be released soon.

Lyon sells her certified organic, non-GMO tamales wholesale to local stores such as: SPD market, BriarPatch Co-op, Natural Selection, Mother Truckers and Natural Valley.

“I’m still small but growing little by little. Both veggie and vegan tamales are selling well but I think the vegan tamales are especially welcome,” she said.

Cinco de Mayo commemorates the battle of Puebla, when the much-outnumbered Mexican army defeated the powerful French army. The real Mexican Independence day is Sept. 16, when Mexico won its independence from Spain. Cinco de Mayo is a popular holiday in the U.S., especially California.

Hospitality House is seeking donations of interview-appropriate clothing and shoes for men and women, nail grooming kits, cosmetic bags with new makeup for women and shaving kits for men.

“We need things that will make people feel good about themselves to help them recover from the blow that homelessness has dealt them,” said Joanna Robinson, Hospitality House development director.

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