



AmeriCorps members with Mountain Roots put together free meals for the non-profit organization's Supper Program. *Courtesy*

## Mountain Roots gets cooking

Non-profit aims to provide 100 free Thanksgiving meals

Sam Liebl  
Times Editor

At the height of the spring coronavirus surge in Gunnison County, Mountain Roots Food Project fed hundreds of families warm meals through its Supper Program. With Thanksgiving approaching and a new wave of virus cases hampering the economy, the non-profit organization is rebooting the program.

Mountain Roots aims to deliver 100 free Thanksgiving meals to families in need. In line with its mission to support local food, the group will be serving 50 of its pasture-raised chickens and partnering with chefs in Crested Butte and Gunnison to prepare the dinners.

Giving Thanksgiving meals to the poor is a community tradition across the country, but Mountain Root's approach is unique, said the organization's Executive Director Holly Conn. That's because the group places an emphasis on fresh, local foods. It may make each meal more expensive, but the benefits go beyond filling bellies.

"A healthy, prepared, warm meal is a game changer with families," Conn said.

Recipients can look forward to meals prepared by three local chefs: one from the Gunnisack, one from High Alpine Brewing Company and a third from Crested Butte Personal Chefs. The chefs are paid for their work with funds Mountain Roots has already secured.

AmeriCorps members will deliver the Thanksgiving meals, and a website with a two-question survey will take orders for households who would like to receive meals.

Mountain Roots is seeking donations so that it can buy



Thea Bergen, Mountain Roots AmeriCorps Member, delivers a free, warm meal to a family facing food insecurity because of the pandemic.

more food, hire more chefs and offer the holiday meals to more folks.

But Mountain Roots is also looking to revive the Supper Program on a more long-term basis so that the effort can help sustain the valley through the winter ahead.

Conn said she anticipates difficulties for both restaurants and for Gunnison Valley families in the coming months.

"If the ski area does alright, Crested Butte restaurants will do alright. But Gunnison restaurants will be on the edge," she said.

The Supper Program benefits food-insecure families and supports restaurants. Contracted establishments receive funds from Mountain Roots to prepare a meal. That funding stream helped eateries stay afloat during the COVID-afflicted off-season months this spring.

Restaurants may need a similar leg up this winter. Local public health officials report a rising number of COVID-19 cases in Gunnison County, and national disease experts have warned that the fall and winter could see a severe rise in cases. The U.S. set a daily record for the highest number of new coronavirus cases on Friday, Nov. 7, according to data from Johns

Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center.

"All the stars are aligned in the wrong place as you go into the fall and winter season, with people congregating at home indoors. You could not possibly be positioned more poorly," said Anthony S. Fauci in an interview with *The Washington Post* on Friday, Nov. 7. Fauci is the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

If the level of need for Supper Program free meals rises to that seen in the spring, Mountain Roots would look to provide meals for 100-120 families at a cost to the organization of about \$4,000 per week or \$20,000 per month.

Conn said Mountain Roots has submitted funding requests to cover those costs, but it may be weeks or months till the group knows whether the funding has been awarded. If the money does fall into place, Mountain Roots would look to start providing weekly meals in early 2021.

(Sam Liebl can be contacted at 970.641.1414 or editor@gunnisonontimes.com)

## BUSINESS CENTS



*Courtesy*

November is stout month at High Alpine Brewing Company in Gunnison, including this week's release of their unique collaboration with Oskar Blues called Double Sweater and Silk Pajamas.

## This beer will keep you cozy as temps drop

### HABC teams up with Oskar Blues on unique stout

The collaboration came about when the vice president of operations for Oskar Blues, Tim Matthews, happened into HABC while on a vacation trip to the valley in 2016. He was impressed with the beers Cline was making, especially the stouts.

The idea to team up was born. They started recipe development and putting together the base foundation of the beer. Then they went "barrel shopping," which included finding some very old and expensive port barrels and Petit Syrah barrels from Napa Valley.

The finished beers can not only be enjoyed at HABC in Gunnison, but at several of Oskar Blues' tap rooms along the Front Range and as far away as North Carolina. About 70 cases went into 12 ounce cans as well.

"To be doing a collaboration with the largest micro craft beer company in the nation is a super huge honor and very humbling to me," Cline said.

And, he said it's likely not the last team up between the two. They're already talking about putting their brewery brainstorming caps on for an IPA.

The cooperative spirit in the beer industry is something that keeps Cline excited.

"The world is way more fun when you share things," he said.

(If you have an item for Business Cents, please contact Chris Dickey at 970.641.1414 or publisher@gunnisonontimes.com.)

High Alpine Brewing Company's (HABC) Scott Cline is a fan of collaborations.

Among others, he's teamed up in the past with Eddyline Brewing and Deerhammer Whiskey, both out of Buena Vista, to create unique beers. His latest collaboration, however, might be his best yet.

A process that started in late 2016 came to fruition on Monday, when HABC tapped its latest stout, a collaboration with the famed Oskar Blues brewery based in Longmont called Double Sweater and Silk Pajamas.

Port barrels. Wine "lees," the tasty remnants left over from the vinting process. Espresso and dried fruit flavors. A nearly two year aging process.

All of this, and a whole lot more, went into the making of this beer.

"We did two batches," Cline explained, "one at their location and one at ours. We have both iterations on tap. And they are awesome."

Double Sweater and Silk Pajamas weighs in with an alcohol content of about 10% and an IBU (international bittering unit) score of 160, depending on which iteration you try.