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Michael Blackwell

My name is Michael Blackwell. I am the Nutrition and Activities Program Manager at the Humboldt Senior Resource Center. The Humboldt Senior Resource Center is a multifaceted agency that serves older adults in Humboldt County. To provide all the services that we do we rely on volunteers to do a variety of tasks. In FY 2010-2011 there were recorded 16,495.8 hours in the Nutrition and Activities department alone. These recorded hours are equivalent to roughly 8 Full Time Employees for a whole year.

If we assign a monetary value to this generosity at even minimum wage, including the benefits that would co-inside, that would equal a donation of \$164,958.00. That is impressive in and of itself, but one may ask what does that mean as far as service and needs met.

The average cost per meal to produce this year at the end of January was \$8.28. If we take the value of the time donation and add it to the Nutrition program budget that time would be roughly a quarter of the overall nutrition budget. Looking at it this way and looking at the cost per meal served, that means that with around the 115,000 meals that we serve a year, we would serve 28,750 meals less and we would serve closer to 86,250 meals. This means there would be longer waiting lists, and more meals denied.

Even with all of this, we have had a waiting list for our home delivered meals program. However due to the continuous generosity of volunteer service, and through various organizations, individuals and grants we have been recently awarded a grant that will help us eliminate our Home Delivered Meal waiting list for the time being. What a great opportunity and significant thing it is that we will be able to do.

These impressive contributions that have been given to the nutrition and activities department does not stop here though. What is provided is not just any ordinary task. These volunteers come together, develop friendships, form a community and establish unofficial, yet much needed safety nets where they watch out for each other, and those served. Their kindness emanates outside of the walls of the various facilities that they gather in. They truly help fulfill the mission of HSRC in supporting seniors and caregivers in maintaining health, dignity and self-determination.

As staff of HSRC we are always amazed at their service and while our attempts to say thank you may seem deficient for what they truly give, our thanks are honest and sincere. From my heart and from the rest of the staff I give you a frank and simple two words, "Thank you."