

Foodstock '08 – Valley Springs

By Nick Baptista

Saturday's Foodstock '08 brought in approximately \$10,000 to the Neighbor to Neighbor Food Pantry to help feed area families having a tough time making financial ends meet. "It was a fabulous first year and a great point of reference for next year," said Heidi Miller, the Neighbor to Neighbor Food Pantry chairperson.

The food pantry is open from 9 to 11 a.m. on Saturdays and is the only pantry in Amador and Calaveras where food is available on a weekly basis. The pantry served 1,808 people in 2006 and is projected to serve 7,000 this year, far above its original budget.

No religious affiliation is necessary for the service and the only question asked is the size of the participating family. The benefit concert was planned to help raise additional funds to meet the increase in demand. The concert featured eight Christian musical groups and was hosted by Good Samaritan Community Covenant Church.

"It was a positive experience," Miller said. "The food was good and it was great fun." Foodstock helped raise funds for the pantry by serving tri-tip and hot dog meals at the event. Approximately 550 meals were served, reported Mabelle Moore, the festival's advertising coordinator. In addition, the leftover food was sold at the end of the event or at church the next day, which raised another \$500.

She added that the silent auction and raffle exceeded projections by 150 percent and approximately 300 canned or boxed food items were donated by those who attended the event. "We were not sure what to expect," Moore said. "We beat our projections and did better than we truly expected." Early results indicate the festival had slightly more than \$5,000 in expenses and revenue between \$15,000 and \$16,000, she conservatively estimated.

"I'm thrilled with the turnout," said Miller. "We pulled in people I didn't know so word went out beyond our church and into the overall community, which is what we were hoping for. Overall, we got good feedback and everyone saw it as a good event for Valley Springs."



Foodstock '08 was a three-generation affair for the Coca family as, clockwise, from left, Josh, Noreen, Paul J., Paul M., and Paul Anthony with the flag got into the music at Saturday's benefit concert to raise money to help feed area families.