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**A bounty of blessings**

By Chloe Kim

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Dozens of hungry families fill their shopping bags with fresh fruits and vegetables every week at a free distribution at the Davis Korean Church known as Friday's Harvest. The popular program celebrates its one-year anniversary Friday.

In addition to the regular bounty of peaches and potatoes, participants this week will receive snow cones and fruit and veggie recipes. Officials from the Food Bank of Yolo County also will serve aguas frescas.

Nearly double the usual amount of produce will be handed out at the anniversary event — 2,000 pounds rather than 1,200. The event also will run an hour longer than usual, from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Davis Korean Church, 603 L St.

"It all got started when we were in the midst of building" the new church, said program organizer Charlene Shon. "We were trying to find a way to bring people to the neighborhood, and the Food Bank needed a way to distribute in Davis."

Jointly sponsored by the church and the Food Bank, Friday's Harvest is an offshoot of the church's Compassion Outreach Ministry, which began in October 2007 as an effort to reach out to low-income families and individuals.

The ministry began talking about establishing Friday's Harvest in June 2009. By August, they had the program up and running.

"We see a lot of people who come every Friday. They say these vegetables are very helpful to provide daily meals," said volunteer Young Hong.

"We get families with kids, or people who pick up the produce for their families, which is fine," Shon added. "We serve everybody, which includes people who don't necessarily have low incomes."

The weekly distribution has attracted some loyal, long-term recipients. Some people have been coming for a year now, Shon said.

One such recipient, Olivia Sanchez, has been coming to Friday's Harvest every week for about four months.

"It's a really, really good program," she said. "The company I'd been working with for 12 years closed, and I haven't been working for the past year, with no other income. So this program has really helped me."

Friday's Harvest also offers a helping hand to families like that of Daniela Tavares, who has three children and appreciates the opportunity to introduce fresh produce into their diet.

"It's a great way to eat healthy and to introduce food that's not just meat, meat, meat," Tavares said. "It's a great help to the community, especially with this economy."

Each week, the church gives away 1,200 pounds of produce, bagged in plastic. They get the produce from the Food Bank, paying 10 cents a pound for delivery.

"We try to give 10 to 12 pounds of produce to each person," Shon said, explaining that about 100 to 120 bags are given away each week.

Each bag is filled with a rainbow of produce, ranging from melons and tomatoes to carrots, yellow squash, zucchini and potatoes. The selection is varied and changes from week to week.

"People are happy with what they get," Shon said. "Sometimes they complain, but we just say to take what you want and leave the rest."

Friday's Harvest also features fruits and vegetables donated by local farmers.

The Davis United Methodist Church also helps out, sharing produce from its Grace Garden.

Recipients can choose to donate a dollar every time they take a bag of produce. Although the Davis Korean Church reserves a \$6,000 annual budget for Friday's Harvest, "the donations really keep us going," Shon said.

"The food is free, but most people choose to donate. The program collects approximately 80 to 90 dollars a week," she said.

None of the produce goes to waste.

"We give all of it away," Shon said. "Any leftovers go to church members who want them."

Occasionally, they run out.

"Sometimes it happens. Not that often, but I remember about two weeks ago, we ran out completely and had to tell people: 'Sorry, we're out.' "

In addition to providing healthy nutrition to community members, Friday's Harvest also benefits the volunteers, who are grateful for the opportunity to help.

"As a volunteer, I really, really think it's rewarding," Hong said. "I'm very happy. I also bring my children, who come and help. It's a good experience for them."

Added Mona Kang, another volunteer, "It gives me an avenue to serve through the church, to get out of myself and reach out to other people. I'm so thankful for that."

Another benefit of the program is that it provides recognition to the church, Shon said.

"It's brought a lot of people to our church, and it's helped make our church familiar in the community," she said. "Every week, we've been having more and more people come."

Shon describes Friday's Harvest as a local mission in Davis.

"We have people going far away for mission trips, but we have our own mission right here in Davis," she said. "We've been so blessed. We want to bless others in the community."

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