

14th Annual Harvest for the Hungry Parade Shines On

By Hayley Gable for The Pasadena Voice
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While the wet and dreary weather did not look hopeful at first, the skies cleared up just in time for The Pasadena Business Association's 14th annual Harvest for the Hungry Caring and Sharing Parade. Held on November 1st, the yearly holiday kick-off event brought together a blend of local businesses, civic groups, neighborhood associations, schools, churches, marching bands, equestrian clubs, car clubs, youth sporting groups and fire companies in a community-wide effort to collect non-perishable food donations for local pantries.

Despite chilly weather, much of the community camped aside the parade route to enjoy the dozens of decorated floats, automobiles, banners and costume characters ride by Tick Neck Road, Mountain Road and throughout the Green Haven community. "It has been very rewarding to see how local businesses support the community, and how the community continues to support our local businesses," commented Jim Anderson, President of The Pasadena Business Association. "The most encouraging part of the parade is when people come with a bag of food to share with the community. The need is not very visible in Pasadena, but we know a number of families that are assisted by the food pantries supported by local churches," he said.

With over 75 different organizations registered for the parade, Pasadena Business Association board member Tom Redmond wanted to add something different to this year's production. In order to build excitement and create more incentive, parade units were judged and awards were given out in seven different categories. Most Original entry was awarded to Dun-Pikin Farm for their trailer filled with live, baby pygmy goats and crowing roosters. Best Youth Group went to Northeast High School for having over 200 spirited students participate in their various parade units. Best Community entry was awarded to The Ice Shack for their involvement in several various parts of the community. Best Musical entry was given to the Chesapeake High School vocal ensemble, while Best Business Display went to Cityline Business Park. Senator Andy Harris took away the prize for Best Patriotic entry by attaching a miniature-size ship to his trailer and imitating the Boston Tea Party. Finally, the Judges Award went to Murphy's Fuel Oil Company for their Ravens football-themed oil truck, which was also decked out with an on-board air conditioning and heating system. "The contest was a big hit this year - it gave everyone incentive to come up with something creative," said Redmond.

Many local politicians also came out to participate in the parade, including Delegates Kipke, Dwyer and Schuh. "This parade is a charm that adds to the small-town feel we have here, you just can't beat it," noted Kipke. "It's a chance for us all to show off our best colors and I think you can tell by the kids faces that all the hard work pays off," he said.

While the fancy floats, dazzling decorations and spirited crowd are all a significant part of the parade, the ultimate purpose is to gather food items for local individuals and families in need. Although the parade has concluded for this year, The Pasadena Business Association continues to collect non-perishable food items throughout the holiday season. Sandy Spring Bank, Arundel Federal Bank, Chesapeake Bank, The Riviera Beach Firehouse and The Maryland Yacht Club are just a few of the locations where The Pasadena Business Association has placed food barrels where donations may be dropped off. "Every year we gather close to 20 tons of food once we're done," said Redmond.

When The Pasadena Business Association initially introduced the idea for a Pasadena parade in 1995, many other next-door communities already had similar events; Glen Burnie hosts an annual Memorial Day parade, while Severna Park celebrates with a Fourth of July parade. Redmond, who had always been fascinated by the Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade, wanted to bring something to Pasadena. With the support of the community and fellow board members, the parade was launched in November 1997. "This has a wonderful theme of helping out the less fortunate, and has turned into such a great thing...next year I want to take it the next level, make it more interesting," he said. "I want to see it become bigger and better each year."