

FRANKLIN TOMORROW VOLUNTEER AWARDS NOMINATION

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR – High Hopes Supper Club
submitted by Gail Powell

As with many institutions, the COVID-19 pandemic presented a fundraising challenge to High Hopes, forcing us to cancel the bulk of our annual, in-person fundraising events. Our team was tasked with thinking out-of-the-box, searching for creative ways to sustain our quality of life – both personally and professionally.

In that spirit, we launched an initiative that not only supports High Hopes, but also local restaurants and caterers who were adversely affected by the pandemic. Everyone has to eat, and Supper Club was the catalyst.

Twice a month, from August 2020 through May 2021, we partnered with a local caterer or restaurant to provide specially curated meals for our consistently growing supper club “members”. Menus and ordering details are posted on the High Hopes website one week in advance of each Supper Club, and orders are accepted while supplies last. The re-heatable meals which include a salad, a main dish and two side items (including a vegetarian option) are \$25 per person, with \$15 contributed to the restaurant and \$10 to High Hopes.

All orders are pre-paid online which allows our patrons a contact-free, curbside pickup at the High Hopes campus. This model allowed us to make new friends and supporters and brought us much needed encouragement during a time when we all felt like we were in a silo – the opportunity to see smiling faces, in person, on a regular basis and have meaningful conversations was salve to our souls. And the support brought to our partners – local restaurateurs and caterers – at a very critical time was a huge boost to their survival.

Brandy Blanton, High Hopes Director of Development, created this idea. Prior to joining High Hopes, she hosted an in-person supper club that supported various non-profits through her magazine, *Southern Exposure*. That event, coupled with her previous experience in the restaurant industry, provided the relationships to tee this new variation of supper club up for success.

Our partners include: Catering & Events by Suzette, Cool Cafe, Miss Daisy’s Kitchen, Daily Dish, Franklin Chop House, Pueblo Real/Tito’s Mexican Restaurant, Scout’s Pub and Moe’s Original Bar B Que.

Supper Club took a hiatus over the summer and made its return in October. However, in those first eight months we sold 1378 meals, 656 desserts, 175 soups and raised more than \$25,000 for our partners and almost \$20,000 for High Hopes. We’d call that a success! Community supporting community and neighbor helping neighbor.