

Good Neighbors by Faith Barnidge: Local nonprofits get high ratings

By Faith Barnidge Columnist

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Charity Navigator is an international nonprofit organization that does the homework so we can have confidence that our charity dollars are well spent. They evaluate nonprofit organizations for financial accountability and transparency.

Four-star ratings are the highest honor, and four of our local organizations have been recognized: the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation, Meals on Wheels Senior Outreach Services, and the Diabetic Youth Foundation.

Thanks to a dedicated board of directors, staff and awesome group of volunteers, these organizations are worthy of our support.

- The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, based in Concord, is leading the fight to end hunger, in partnership with our community and in service of our neighbors in need. They serve more than 149,000 people every month, and distribute 18 million pounds a year, enough food for 14 million meals.

Congratulations to board chairman Bruce Phelps and executive director Larry Sly.

- Tony La Russa's Animal Rescue Foundation, based in Walnut Creek, rescues dogs and cats at public shelters, giving them a chance at life until a new home can be found. ARF innovative programs strengthen the human-animal bond for children, seniors, veterans and people in disadvantaged circumstances throughout our community.

Congratulations to co-founder (with his wife Elaine La Russa) and board chairman Tony La Russa, and executive director Elena Bicker.

- Meals on Wheels and Senior Outreach Services, based in Walnut Creek, serves a growing population of seniors in Contra Costa County to help keep them healthy, safe, and independent in their communities.

Services include: Meals on Wheels, CC Cafes, Friendly Visitors, the Home Care Registry, the Fall Prevention program, and geriatric care managers.

Congratulations to board chairman John Judd and executive director Elaine Clark.

- The Diabetic Youth Foundation, based in Concord, improves the quality of life for children, teens and families affected by diabetes.

The foundation provides education and recreation within a supportive community, encouraging personal growth, knowledge and independence.

DYF serves more than 1,900 individuals annually (children and teens with diabetes, siblings, parents and guardians) through its resident camps, day camps, recreation programs and diabetes education seminars.

Congratulations to board president Mark McComb and executive director Janet Kramschuster.

To research these and other organizations in our community, visit www.charitynavigator.org.