

# St. Anthony's celebrates 20 years of feeding the hungry

By TOM FRIESEN

It all began 20 years ago, with weekend snacks prepared for two dozen hungry folks.

But as St. Anthony's Padua Dining Room celebrates the start of its third decade of service, 20 volunteers a day from the active roster of 140 are serving hot, hearty dinners Monday through Saturday to the poor, elderly and homeless who now number well into the hundreds.

On a typical day, more than 600 people are fed at the Middlefield

Road dining hall, with the number sometimes rising to 800 — and to

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*The public is invited  
to celebrate  
anniversary on  
Friday, Sept. 9.*

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nearly double that on Thanksgiving and Christmas. It is the largest dining hall of its kind between San Francisco and San Jose.

The dining room is operated by a nonprofit organization that relies solely on donations from individuals and private foundations, so the special event planned for noon to 2:30 p.m. Friday, Sept. 9, is as much about raising consciousness in the community as it is about celebrating.

For the dining room's regular guests, the event will mean a special Christmas-style banquet. For the extra visitors — to include interested members of the public, county officials and the mayors of Menlo Park, Redwood City and

Palo Alto — the event will offer a peek at the workings of a cost-effective organization and its dedicated volunteers.

In addition to feeding the hungry, St. Anthony's provides clothing to the needy from a boutique-style donation center and offers the services of a county health service nurse three days a week.

Anyone interested in watching these services in action is welcome to stop by between noon and 2:30 p.m. at the dining hall, located behind St. Anthony's Church at 350 Middlefield Road.