

# Gatsby ...continued from Page 1A

we had about 205 reserved, so we're a full house. We have carved tenderloin, carved rack of lamb and all the fixings so people can enjoy a nice dinner. It's a nice party all night to bring in the new year."

Brasstown Valley Resort went above and beyond with this year's decorations, celebrating the decadence of the roaring 1920s in true Gatsby fashion, full of glitz, glamor and plenty of gold embellishments, utilizing almost every room off the main ballroom.

Each of the rooms were themed, commemorating the characters of the beloved classic, and one room, called Daisy's Tea Room, featured all the necessities needed for an after-dinner caffeine fix before heading off to Jay Gatsby's Champagne Lounge to gear up for the midnight toast.

Throughout the evening, those who decided to ring in the new year at Brasstown Valley enjoyed a full evening of fine dining, dancing and the musical offerings of this year's featured band, Atlanta Production Band from Atlanta, which provided Jazzy, Motown renditions of multigenerational favorites up until the balloon drop at midnight.

Blairsville native Stephanie Marchal rang in the new year for the first time at Brasstown Valley, enjoying the evening with her daughter who was visiting from Florida, and she was so impressed with the evening that she says she will definitely be back next year.

"This has been amazing," said Marchal. "We're definitely going to start making this a yearly tradition. It's so much fun and there's so much energy."

As far as New Year's resolutions go, Marchal is taking it simple this year, making more of a promise to herself than a decision to change, like most do with each New Year.

"2016 was alright," said Marchal. "Next year, though, I want to live with no regrets. It's going to be a great year. I can just feel it."

Between the gala and the more intimate dining experience, Brasstown Valley offers something for everyone to enjoy for New Year's celebrations, and this year was undeniably an event to remember.

"Brasstown isn't just the place to be at New Year's," said Burton. "Brasstown Valley Resort is the place to be all the time. We have great people that work here, it's a great facility, we have great food, and I can't imagine anywhere else that anyone would want to be."



Gala patrons danced for hours on end, carrying themselves on fleet feet into the new year.



Bold hats and flapper dresses came back in style during Brasstown Valley's New Year's Eve gala, all while two movie versions of "The Great Gatsby" played as patrons dined.



Happy New Year in an ice sculpture at Brasstown Valley Resort.

# Food Pantry ...continued from Page 1A

Those donations are especially important, considering that, because of the demand, residents are only able to pick up food once every two months.

And the residents being served range from young children to senior citizens, with many families deciding to live together in multiple generation households to cut back on bills, or because they have no other choice.

"We have had as many as four generations with 10 and 12 people living in a residence," said Sullivan, who collects that data on forms that food pantry patrons must fill out when they visit every other month.

Yes, there are probably people taking food from the pantry who could decide to work instead, but the overwhelming majority of households that show up for their food like clockwork really, truly need the food to survive.

"For those that help people who need food, they need to be generous with their donations," said Sullivan, who sees the need firsthand. "I'll take \$10 before I'll take nothing. I can do a lot with \$10. I'll take \$100. I'll take more than that."

"There are people that are blessed up here that give to me every month. There are people that come here every two months and have been since I started here six years ago, and I know their voice on the phone when they call and say, will you check and see if I can come."

Sullivan has noticed a trend, however, that the need has been decreasing during the summertime of each year, and it took her a while to figure out why that was.

"The summertime is our least busy time," said Sullivan. "When I first started doing this, the summertime was just bombed because kids were getting out of school. And then about four years ago, all of a sudden it was only our senior citizens."

"And I couldn't figure it out. I was like, okay, where is everybody? Did they all go on vacation for the summer and not come back? And then it was the same thing the next year and the next year."

Finally, Sullivan asked one of her food pantry regulars what was going on, because she knew that food stamps had gone down for everyone, and even then the pantry remained slow in the summer.

Well, her regular informed her that they'd planted a garden, so they didn't need to come that summer. And others, maybe not her senior citizens, but other younger families had been doing the same, growing



The Union County Food Pantry relies strictly on donations.



Patrons are able to visit the Union County Food Pantry once every two months.



Food City has been a reliable resource for Sullivan, supplying deals and helping her in many ways as she tries to feed as many people in need as possible.

their own food.

Food stamps have been on the decline in recent years around the state, and Sullivan sees a day coming in the not-too-distant future when food stamps are cut out completely for everyone but homebound individuals with disabilities.

When that day comes, donations will be needed more than ever, and Sullivan asks that those who are blessed continue to be generous with their donations to the food pantry and/or the various food ministries in Union County.

Antioch Baptist Church holds their food ministry every third Thursday of each month, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Mountain Presbyterian, All Saints Lutheran and St. Francis of Assisi hold their food

ministry every Thursday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Mountain Presbyterian.

For information on the House of Prayer Church's food ministry, which gives out fresh produce and offers a soup kitchen, call 706-835-1630.

First Baptist Church of Blairsville also offers a food ministry, on the first Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Sullivan and more information about the Union County Food Pantry can be reached at 706-745-6596.

Food City has been a good partner for the food pantry, helping Sullivan in her quest to feed the hungry of Union County.

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