

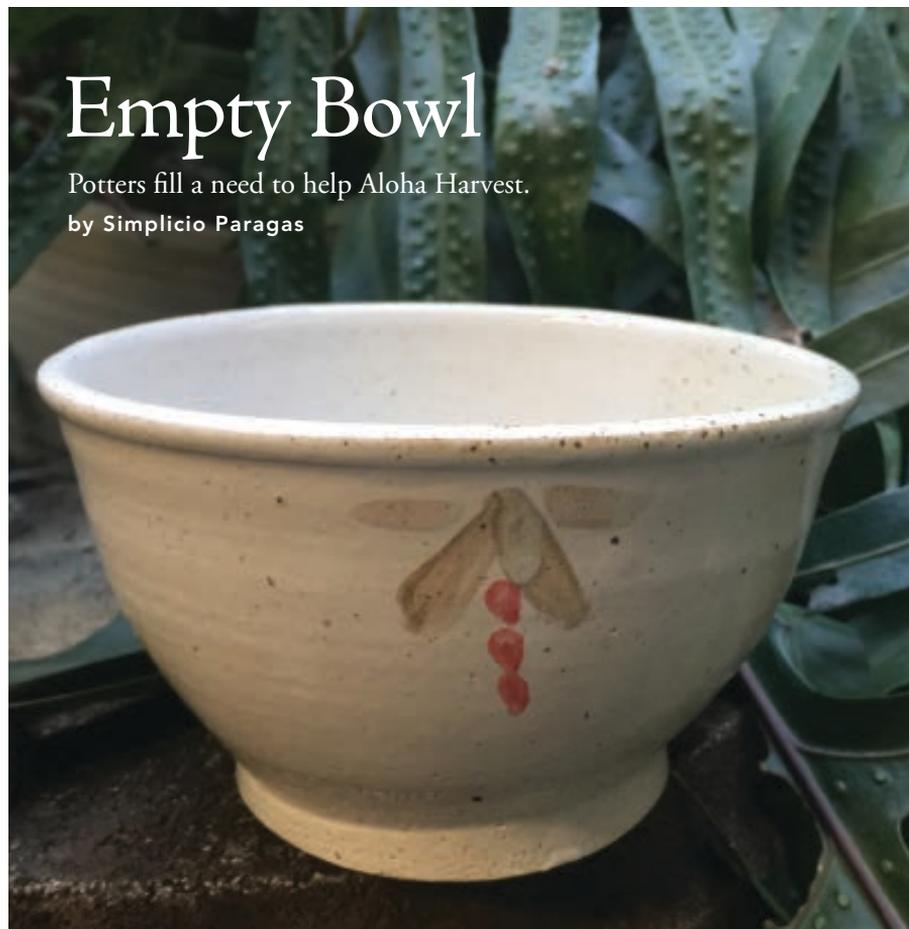
# Empty Bowl

Potters fill a need to help Aloha Harvest.  
by **Simplicio Paragas**



## EMPTY BOWL FUNDRAISER

Members of Hawai'i Potters' Guild hold 'Throw-a-thons' in preparation for this year's fundraiser at Pōmaika'i Ballrooms. Attendees will receive a bowl of soup — and soup bowl.



Members of the Hawai'i Potters Guild like to toss their support around, especially when it involves 'throwing' a ceramic vessel for Empty Bowl. Since 2009, local artisans and chefs have collaborated in an effort to end hunger during this biennial fundraiser that's modeled off the national and international Empty Bowls Project.

Founded in 1990 by Michigan artists, John Har-

tom and Lisa Blackburn, Empty Bowls started as a classroom project but the movement quickly spread across the United States and to at least 14 other countries. In brief, the project uses ceramic arts to raise money to help the hungry and to increase awareness of famine and related issues while at the same time advocating for arts education.

At each event, potters and other artisans donate

handcrafted bowls. Attendees then select one of the bowls and are served a meal of soup and bread. They take home their bowl as a reminder of how many go empty around the world. Monies raised are donated to organizations fighting hunger locally, like soup kitchens and food banks, or globally, like Oxfam and Feed the Hungry. This year's beneficiary will be Aloha Harvest.

IMAGES COURTESY EMPTY BOWL

“The whole studio and board volunteer for this,” says Janet Kelly, president of the Hawai‘i Potters’ Guild, which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. “We feel it’s important to support these types of events because a community will only thrive when there’s community involvement.”

Last year, Kelly took the “Challenge Potters,” pledging to make 100 bowls, doubling the required minimum for this potters’ friendly throw-down-like competition. “I thought it was going to take me forever to make them,” Kelly chuckles. “But when you’ve done this as much as I have, it’s like muscle memory and everything comes easy.”

This year, Kelly will again participate in the challenge, but she’s only committed to produce 50 bowls. Between guild members and high-school students, along with other organizations and artisans, approximately 3,000 bowls will be available for this year’s Empty Bowl, which will be held March 31 at Pōmaika‘i Ballrooms at Dole Cannery.

“It will be 19 months in the planning when Empty Bowl finally takes place on March 31,” says Stacey Kuhn, who is co-chairing this event with her husband, Mark Kuhn.



“It takes time to make 3,000 bowls (laughing).”

Attendees are advised to arrive promptly at 6 p.m. — or 5 p.m. for VIP admission — if they want their choice of bowl and soup, which will be donated by 22 restaurants, including 12th Ave Grill, 40 Carrots, Highway Inn, Hula Grill, KCC Culinary School, Pili Group,

MW Restaurant, Side Street Inn, Sushi II, The Nook, Tiki’s Grill & Bar, Mahina & Sons, REAL a Gastropub, Mariposa, Koko Head Café, Pig & The Lady, Juicy Brew, ChadLou’s Coffee & Tea, The Castaway Kitchen and Murphy’s Bar & Grill.

“This is a full donation from participating chefs,” says Amanda Corby

Noguchi of Under My Umbrella, which is helping to coordinate this year’s event. “Each chef is asked to prepare 10 gallons of soup or 300, 8-ounce servings.”

Corby Noguchi notes that her spouse, Mark Noguchi of Pili Group, will prepare her grandma’s white chicken chili recipe, along with special appetizers that will be served on custom ceramic plates.

“This year, we’ll also have a dessert and coffee bar, bento options, and wine and beer,” Corby Noguchi says. “This event feels more inclusive and more affordable than some of the other events. You arrive with an empty bowl but you leave with a full stomach — and a soup bowl.”

*Tickets cost \$30, \$50 and \$75. Sponsorship tickets of eight range between \$1,000 and \$5,000. For more information, visit [emptybowlhawaii.org](http://emptybowlhawaii.org).\**

