Gowrie Group’s Annual Challenge Raises $160,747 to Benefit The Shoreline Soup Kitchens & Pantries

Photo (left to right): Ed Gumbrecht (Gowrie Group COO and President), Laura MacLeod (Gowrie Group Marketing Associate), Ellen Rabin (Shoreline Soup Kitchens & Pantries Executive Director), Carter Gowrie (Gowrie Group CEO and Founder), Lindas Dillon (SSKP Volunteer and Gowrie Retiree), and Whitney Peterson (Gowrie Group SVP Marketing).

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Through the generous support of over 400 local individuals and companies, the 2018 Gowrie Group Challenge was a huge success – raising $160,747 for The Shoreline Soup Kitchens & Pantries (SSKP). Since Gowrie Group began this challenge in 2004, the challenge has raised over 1.6 million dollars for the SSKP, which equates to providing over 5 million meals to people in need in our community.

Gowrie Group believes strongly in giving back to the local community and is committed to help end hunger along the Connecticut shoreline. The Gowrie Group Challenge is Gowrie’s annual matching fundraising initiative to benefit The Shoreline Soup Kitchens & Pantries (SSKP). The 2018 ALICE Report* showed that one in three (30%) Connecticut residents struggle to meet their family’s basic needs each month. ALICE stands for Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed, which is defined as individuals or families who have earnings above the federal poverty level, but below basic cost-of-living threshold. The
matching approach of the challenge doubles the impact of generous donations from local businesses and individuals. Contributions are used to fill the shelves of the SSKP’s five pantries and to serve meals at the organization’s nine hot meal sites.

This year’s challenge ran from November 1, 2018 to the end of the year. Gowrie Group kicked off the challenge with a generous $30,000 dollar-for-dollar matching donation. Five local companies stepped forward as Partner Sponsors: LC Doane Company, Tower Labs, BrandTech Scientific, Lenny & Joe’s Fish Tale, and Sound Rigging Services. Together, the Partner Sponsors provided an additional $32,500 in matching funds.

Two special local events also helped raise funds for the Gowrie Challenge. The first event was the “Black Friday Benefit Concert” held annually at The Katherine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center (The Kate) on the Friday after Thanksgiving. The Meadows Brothers, Ebin-Rose Trio, Moving Target, Lauren Agnelli & Dave Rave, and Carter Gowrie & Friends gathered to play for this special concert which raised $5,739 for the challenge. The second event was the ballet performance of “Ahavah: The Story of Christmas” which was performed at the Morgan School in Clinton, CT. This event raised an additional $5,000 for the challenge.

Carter Gowrie, CEO and Founder of Gowrie Group shared, “I am very proud of the hard work that is put into the Challenge year after year. The Gowrie Challenge continues to grow with new ideas to help raise more money for the Shoreline Soup Kitchens & Pantries.” Carter added, “The last three years I have had the special opportunity to perform in the Black Friday Benefit Concert at The Kate with several other local musicians. It is something special to be able to come together for one night and play good music for an even greater cause in front an enthusiastic crowd. I encourage you to save the date for next year and bring your family and friends to the concert – it is fun for all and the proceeds benefit the SSKP.”

Ellen Rabin, Executive Director of the Shoreline Soup Kitchen said, “SSKP is grateful for the support of Carter Gowrie and everyone at The Gowrie Group. The funds from the Gowrie Challenge are critical to The Shoreline Soup Kitchens & Pantries’ success. SSKP is proud that for 30 years this organization has been providing nutritious food and reducing hunger for those in need in our community. Carter launched the challenge in 2004 and the need remains as great as ever in 2019.”

Throughout the year, Gowrie Group and its employees donate time and services to soup kitchens and pantries across New England. Each summer, Gowrie employees prepare and serve a lunch at the SSKP meal site in Old Saybrook. In addition, employees work together to plan and host food drives every holiday season at many of Gowrie Group’s locations including Westbrook CT, Darien CT, Newport RI, Marshfield MA, Annapolis MD and Manchester NH. This past December, Gowrie employees at the company’s headquarters in Westbrook, Connecticut collected and donated over 80 pounds of cereal to the SSKP.

Ed Gumbrecht, COO and President of Gowrie Group commented, “Through the generosity of friends, colleagues and business leaders, the Gowrie Challenge raised over $160,000 this season to help the Shoreline Soup Kitchen & Pantries battle hunger in our community. Since we began this work fifteen years ago we’ve raised over $1.6 million dollars. On behalf of the whole Gowrie organization, I want to extend sincere thanks to all who continue to give time, attention and financial support to this most important cause.”

Gowrie Group and The Shoreline Soup Kitchens & Pantries are proud of all that they have accomplished in the past 15 years of their partnership. We would also like to thank those who generously spread the word about this effort. Once again, morning radio personality, Bob Muscatel of WLIS/WMRD, updated the community throughout the Challenge from his radio station. Shore Publishing provided a series of print
advertisements in local papers across the shoreline. In addition, the E-List provided online advertisement on their website and in their weekly e-newsletters.

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The Shoreline Soup Kitchens & Pantries. Since 1989, providing food and fellowship to those in need in the towns of Chester, Clinton, Deep River, East Lyme, Essex, Killingworth, Lyme, Madison, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook, and Westbrook. shorelinesoupkitchens.org

*The Middlesex United Way's 2018 ALICE Report. ALICE stands for Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed, is defined as individuals or families who have earning above the federal poverty level, but below basic cost-of-living threshold.