

DINNER: Program's clients wash cars for police departments, maintain Gold Country Fairgrounds

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 director of adult and residential services at Alta in Sacramento. This was Rydquist's third year attending the event. "You don't often see a program with services that integrate with the city and county government the way this program does. It's unique."

The program's clients wash cars for Auburn Police, Grass Valley Police and Nevada County Highway Patrol, maintain the grounds at the Gold Country Fairgrounds, weed, plant and harvest produce from the Rotary garden that's then donated to local food pantries. They also help at the senior center.

Brandon Wautlet, AIM specialist, takes about 12 of his clients to the Auburn Police Department every Wednesday to detail, wash and dry police cars. He started the program seven years ago after touring the department and seeing the need for car washing.

"Officers normally have to maintain their own vehicles," Wautlet said. "They have to wash their cars on their day off, and they don't get paid for that."

At first, Wautlet said, the department was hesitant about the program because they weren't sure if the work would be up to their standards.

"(Since then) they've really supported us and really come to rely on us," he said.

John Ruffcorn, director of public safety, offered a commendation for the program and gave a speech during lunch.

"It takes a lot to make a community work," he said. "You are a vital part of this community."

Volunteerism not only teaches the participants job skills, it also allows



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AIM volunteers served the Thanksgiving feast to 150 guests Thursday afternoon. This the seventh annual Thanksgiving dinner AIM has prepared and served to the Auburn Community. Many of the servers have obtained a food handling certificate through AIM that is helpful for employment in the food industry.



For the seventh year in a row Achieve Independent Milestones (AIM) was presented with a Certificate of Commendation from the Auburn Police Department. The organization and their clients sponsored an early Thanksgiving Dinner for members of the Auburn Police Department, Highway Patrol, Auburn Rotary and community members.

them to figure out what kind of work they enjoy and want to do in the future.

One client, Paul B., volunteers at the garden and fairgrounds and was enjoying his third Thanksgiving meal with AIM on Thursday.

"I like (the program)," he said. "I want to work in a grocery store."

Wautlet enjoys seeing his clients move on to paid employment, he said. One of his participants recently started a position at a school in Foresthill teaching computer skills to developmentally challenged students.

Paula Leahy, a volunteer with Auburn Police, has done tremendous work to connect volunteers with



Auburn Director of Public Safety John Ruffcorn (left) presented AIM Director Janet Brandon with a 2015 Certificate of Commendation.

other organizations that need them, Wautlet said.

"She's been invaluable to the program," he said,

"getting new opportunities to volunteer, offering tours and advocating."

Currently 85 people be-

tween Rocklin and Tahoe participate in the state-funded program, but Auburn has the highest number of volunteer opportunities, Brandon said.

The volunteerism is a point of pride for her clients, she said.

"Even the clients who are not ready for a job right now can say, 'I helped out with that,' or 'those flowers are there because of me,'" Brandon said.

Thursday's Thanksgiving lunch was another opportunity for AIM clients to be proud as everyone who volunteered to serve food had earned a food handler's certificate.

"This opens so many doors for our clients," said Brittany Obey, office manager for the program. "The clients have a blast, too, so that's a bonus."

Reach reporter
 Tricia Caspers-Ross at
 tricar@goldcountrymedia.com