



MONTACHUSETT
Opportunity Council
Making Opportunity Count

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**MOC'S SEVENTH ANNUAL "TASTE OF NORTH CENTRAL"
Wednesday, November 16th 5:30-8:30 PM
Courtyard by Marriott in Fitchburg**

This year marks the Montachusett Opportunity Council's seventh annual "*Taste of North Central*", a fabulous night of great food, fun, and music to benefit the region's anti-poverty agency. Considered the Event of the Year, over 30 restaurants and an expected attendance of over 600 people, this will definitely be an event not to miss. Sonoma Restaurant, Apple Hill Farm Restaurant and Country Club, Chocksett Inn, Gardner Ale House, Lidio's Restaurant, Aunty Ellen's Creative Confections are among the many restaurants confirmed to date.

Mike Cooley, host of local cable TV *Cool Talk*, radio host and creator of Dining out in Central Mass, a social media marketing effort for local, independently owned restaurants in the region, will emcee for the evening. He will highlight the many local restaurants participating in the evening and conduct the live auction fundraiser. There will also be a silent auction with items suited for everyone, including overnight stays, restaurant gift certificates and holiday gifts donated from local businesses.

Kathleen McDermott, Executive Director of MOC, Inc. stated that the fundraising from this event "is paramount in our continued effort to support our Agency's mission of developing collaborative opportunities and empowering low-income individuals and families in the Montachusett region to achieve self-sufficiency and also respond to the many area families in immediate need of emergency housing, fuel and food during this difficult economic crisis."

Funding from last year's "Taste of North Central" Fundraising Dollars has provided the following assistance in Our Local Communities:

- \$18,441 in proceeds assisted 66 households in need of utility assistance.
- \$1,595 to support MOC's Community Services at Green Acres. This program operates the Leona E. Fleming Food Pantry, provides emergency housing assistance, and runs a summer feeding program. As a result of fundraising efforts last year, this facility now houses a Homework Center for residential youth of Green Acres and Meadow Brook Village.
- \$7,443 in proceeds assisted 10 households in need of rental assistance.

- \$12,000 in proceeds to support 20 youth to participate in summer employment opportunities through MOC's Summer YouthWorks program.

In addition, funding from previous events has also supported:

- \$30,236 in proceeds assisted 13 households in improving their self-sufficiency by developing assets through MOC's Individual Development Accounts (IDA). IDAs are designed to assist and strengthen families, neighborhoods, communities and local economies by helping low-income families invest in assets such as home ownership, small business capitalization and education. IDAs are a matched savings account and the program combines savings accounts with Financial Education training, Asset Specific Training and ongoing Case Management to help families and individuals reach their asset ownership goals.

The Taste of North Central is open to the public and tickets can be purchased in advance. Tickets are \$30.00 each and are available by calling MOC at (978) 345-7040, online at www.tasteofnorthcentral.org, and at the door. A complete list of confirmed restaurants and sponsors are also available on the website.