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Salute e Vita Ristorante's Fifth Annual Free Thanksgiving Feast Set to Serve 1300 Less Fortunate in Style

RICHMOND, CA (November 16, 2015) ... Where can you find Mayor Tom Butt, the Chief of Police, City Manager, and Fire Chief on Thanksgiving Day? Why, volunteering at the fifth annual free *Thanksgiving Feast for the Needy* at Salute e Vita Ristorante in Richmond, of course.

Enthusiasm for this sensational charitable event continues to spread and now more than a dozen local businesses and community leaders are contributing to its success.

Menbere "Menbe" Aklilu, Salute's owner and founder of what has become one of Richmond's proudest traditions, expects to serve a record 1300 guests in three seatings at this year's feast on November 26. She's coordinating with local shelters, churches and nonprofits that serve veterans, the homeless, women and children, and elderly communities in West Contra Costa County, and will provide bus service for guests back and forth from their sites.

What makes Menbe's events truly extraordinary is not only her generous spirit but also her determination to treat the less fortunate with dignity and respect. Guests are seated at tables set with lovely dinnerware on white tablecloths, and served a traditional Thanksgiving dinner in her elegant restaurant, overlooking the beautiful Marina Bay.

Again this year she's also offering free flu shots. Plus, each guest will leave with a goody bag filled with personal items, and will have the opportunity to select a coat all of which have been made available through generous donations from the community.

The following is a partial list of the local Richmond businesses that have come together to generously support and contribute to the success of this year's event:

- Richmond Wholesale is donating the turkeys.
- Galaxy Desserts is donating the desserts.

- Maggiora Baking Company is donating the dinner rolls.
- Standard Party Rentals (formerly Hartmans Studios) is donating tents for the flu shots and volunteers, plus chairs, tables, and dinnerware.
- Menbe's Way Fund is providing bus service for guests.
- Richmond Police Department is providing a wheelchair van for disabled guests.
- Merchants Bank is coordinating the transportation logistics.
- Oakland Packaging & Supply will send a crew to handle all aspects of the clean up.
- Local schools are holding coats drives and the donated coats will be distributed at the event.
- Channel Lumber Company custom-built coat racks to display the donated coats. True to Menbe's desire to treat everyone with kindness and respect, she didn't want her guests rummaging through boxes to select coats. Instead, she plans to hang each coat beautifully on the racks.
- Richmond's Mayor, Police Chief, Fire Chief, City Manager and many other community dignitaries are volunteering their time to serve the meals.

To "Menbe" giving back to her community is an essential part of who she is. Although now a successful businesswoman, she was once a homeless mother herself. Earlier this year, she created the Menbe's Way Fund, managed by the nonprofit Richmond Community Foundation, to support the *Thanksgiving Feast for the Needy* as well as her many other charitable efforts.

Salute e Vita Ristorante is located at 1900 Esplanade Dr. in Marina Bay, Richmond, CA. For more information, please call (510) 215-0803 or visit Salutemarinabay.com.

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