

# Pine Island Chamber presents donations to community organizations at holiday mixer

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Chamber efforts also includes a new scholarship program

Pine Island — During its annual holiday mixer, held at the Harvest Luncheonette on Dec. 13, the Pine Island Chamber of Commerce presented more than \$1,500 in donations to local organizations in need of help. Organizations that benefited included the Alamo, the Warwick Ecumenical and Village of Florida Food Pantries, the Backpack Snack Attack Program and the Warwick Community Kitchen meal, a soup kitchen Girl Scout project held at Pine Island School for anyone in need of a warm meal.

Last August a chamber subcommittee, led by members Peter and Sondra Hall, held a sold-out Black Dirt Feast, a five-course dinner prepared by top regional chefs. The dinner is a celebration of farm to table and each year raises money to aid various community projects.

The chamber's 2011 Black Dirt Feast proceeds were designated to benefit a new chamber scholarship program, hamlet beautification and giving back to the community to feed those in need.

The Pine Island Chamber of Commerce was founded 50 years ago by residents and business people of the hamlet who wanted to provide an organized means for protecting and promoting the interests of the Pine Island.

"Today," said Marlene Caraballo, president of the organization, "our chamber continues its mission to increase prosperity in the business community, support and enhance the uniqueness of the region and to enrich the lives of all residents through community spirit and cooperation."

In 2011, the chamber worked toward its mission by hosting two well-attended mixers, an annual membership dinner to celebrate its 50th anniversary, organizing and operating a new seasonal community farmers market, the "Black Dirt Farmers Market" in the center of the hamlet.

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