

'A night of music and laughter'

Dueling Pianos headline CDR fundraiser at Branford Elks Lodge

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By Lisa Reisman

Quick. Think of a song. Any song of any genre and any era from pop to country to hip hop to bebop to Motown to swing.

Chances are, Savage Dueling Pianos, which will appear at a Community Dining Room fundraising event at Branford Elks Lodge on Friday, Sept. 30, will pull it out of a deep repertoire that has seen them touring from Singapore to Switzerland and throughout the United States.

"It's a fun, high-energy, request-driven, singalong experience," said Savage Pianos' Matt Tobin, a multi-instrumentalist and, as his website alleges, "third-place finisher in the 2015 O. Henry Pun-Off."

The fundraiser will culminate in a drawing for The Shoreline Experience raffle, which includes a wealth of prizes and gift cards to benefit the programs and services of the Community Dining Room.

According to CDR Executive Director Judy Barron, the event comes at a critical time for the organization, which supports anyone in need from East Haven to Old Saybrook—and not just because it coincides with Hunger Action Month.

"Families and individuals now more than ever are struggling to make ends meet, to purchase needed food, and to have funds to pay for rent, fuel, and their other basic needs," she said.

Statistics bear that out. A New Haven Register report on Sept. 19 detailed a recent survey from the



Matt Tobin / Contributed photo

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New Haven-based non-profit DataHaven showing 17 percent of Connecticut adults unable to afford food at some point in the past year. That figure, it stated, constituted "the highest total in the five years DataHaven has conducted its annual survey."

The high level of food insecurity means, Barron said, "we are serving more people so we need to purchase more food to help meet the need."

She expressed gratitude to the businesses and organizations up and down the Shoreline for answering that need, and to the individuals supporting the effort by buying tickets, and to the CDR team, led by fundraising coordinator Courtney Rosenberg, for staging pop-up raffle ticket sales at events around the Shoreline over the last

month.

"They're everywhere," she said.

Raffle prizes feature 16 themed packages from Grillin' Time, with a Weber Gas Grill from Hallock's, a cooler courtesy of West Marine, and a grilling basket from Gracious Gifts & Home; to Car Care 1 with generous gift cards from Town Fair Tire, Palumbo's Automotive, and a J&E Auto Detailing package, to a Lotto tree donated by Re-Max Showcase of New Haven.

"This will be a night of music and laughter with the community coming together to support those most vulnerable among us with the most important basic necessity in life — food — at a time when the need is most urgent," Barron said.

To purchase raffle tickets, call 203-488-9750 ext.

3, email fundraising@communitydiningroom.org or visit <http://cdri.betterworld.org>, which includes a full listing of all prizes from sponsors.

Savage Piano's Dueling Pianos will take place at the Branford Elks Lodge on 158 S. Montowese, Branford. Doors open at 6 p.m. Show at 7 p.m. To buy event tickets, \$50, call 203-488-9750 ext. 3, or email fundraising@communitydiningroom.org

Personal charcuterie cups, \$10, and charcuterie boards (serves 6-8), \$50, are available. Pre-order when purchasing tickets.

The raffle drawing will be held Friday, Sept. 30, at the Branford Elks Lodge. Raffle prize winners need not be present. The drawing will also be live streamed on the CDR's Facebook page.