

# PASO ROBLES PRESS

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## ‘Third Thursday’ promotes downtown, benefits must! Charities

First event kicks off Thursday, Oct. 17  
in downtown Paso Robles

Hayley Thomas  
OF THE PASO ROBLES PRESS

**PASO ROBLES** — A menagerie of downtown Paso Robles businesses aim to inject a bit more “fun” into local fundraising efforts thanks to a new Third Thursday promotion benefiting must! Charities. The inaugural affair begins this Thursday, Oct. 17 and encourages residents to nosh, purchase and play in support of neighbors in need.

Nine local businesses — ranging from beauty establishment Salon Roux and shoe store Sole Tree to new eatery La Cosecha Bar + Restaurant and collective arts space Studios on the Park — will donate a portion of their sales for the night to the North County nonprofit, which is dedicated to improving quality of life in the region by offering compassion and resources to those in need.

In addition, participating businesses will also feature unique customer offerings, which are slated to evolve each Third Thursday as the promotion picks up steam.

The original idea is the brainchild of Salon Roux owner Jacque Leonard, who found great success offering her customers exclusive deals, special trunk shows and libations on the third Thursday of each month. A subsequent partnership with Carole MacDonal of Il Cortile Ristorante and La Cosecha Bar + Restaurant has

been fruitful: MacDonal helped to expand the idea into a community-beneficial fundraiser.

MacDonal, who had already been donating proceeds of wine sales from her restaurants to must! Charities, said she was looking for a broader way to give back to the North County region while simultaneously bolstering Paso’s downtown economy.

“[Several shops downtown] did an End of Summer Bash benefiting must! Charities, and I thought, ‘How could we do something like that?’” said MacDonal. A loyal customer of Salon Roux, and a fan of Leonard’s events, the restaurateur put two-and-two together.

“It just clicked,” said MacDonal. “I asked Jacque to lunch one day and asked if I could steal her Third Thursday concept...We were thinking of a way to give back and to show off downtown Paso Robles, and Third Thursday is a fun way to accomplish something meaningful and long-lasting.”

At that time, Leonard’s salon Third Thursday promotion had ballooned to encompass hundreds of dedicated followers. In essence, Leonard knew the she was on to something big.

“It started small and really evolved, and the salon had gotten a lot of accolades for it,” said Leonard, who was featured twice for the Third Thursday events within the pages of Salon Today Magazine.



Photo by Hayley Thomas

From left, Salon Roux owner Jacque Leonard and Carole MacDonal of Il Cortile Ristorante and La Cosecha Bar + Restaurant have partnered to create Third Thursdays in downtown Paso Robles, a monthly event that aims to simultaneously promote local businesses while benefiting must! Charities.

“Customers were telling us the concept worked, and we listened,” she said. “There was always a fun factor. The only thing that had been missing, for me, was a way to give back.”

For the two women, must! Charities was an obvious beneficiary.

“As a business owner, you get hit up five times a day to give money to different causes, and I’ve donated to those causes for years,” said MacDonal. “But, you get to a point where you aren’t sure where your money is going. Must! Charities, it was formed by a group of winemakers who came together and researched local needs — and they’ve re-

ally done their research.”

In 2012, must! Charities worked tirelessly to support the Boys and Girls club. This year, the nonprofit partnered with the Food Bank of San Luis Obispo County to provide lunches to thousands of children in need specifically within the North County region.

“A lot of times, these are the children of the people picking the grapes, who are making wine, who are in need more than everyone,” said MacDonal. “I think there is a huge need here, and I feel everyone in Paso Robles knows that it can be a ‘tale of two cities’ at times. [Third Thursdays] is a fun way to give back, to know where your money is going and to see those dollars work.”

MacDonal said it’s equally

rewarding to see Paso Robles grow into its own as a true hot spot.

“For years, people haven’t paid attention to Paso Robles as a shopping center, but now Paso Robles is a shopping destination and you can find everything you need right here,” said MacDonal, adding that she’s lived in New York, Los Angeles and Toronto.

Leonard said she not only aims to provide the best in her own salon, which offers beauty services as well as candles, lotions and accessories: She makes a point to shop locally whenever possible.

“It warms my heart to know that now, through this monthly event, we can reach more of our community as they take advantage of special discounts

### PARTICIPATING THIRD THURSDAY BUSINESSES

Salon Roux — full-service salon and spa

La Cosecha Bar + Restaurant — boasting flavors from Spain, Central and South America

Firefly Gallery — boutique for home, apparel and accessories

General Store Paso Robles — locally sourced provisions for picnic, pantry and home

Il Cortile Ristorante — memorable fine Italian dining

AndBe Boutique — a place to discover beautiful things for you and your home

Sole Tree — shoe boutique offering quality leather footwear from around the world

Studios on the Park — nonprofit open studios art center

Dr. Darya Boland — naturopath and wellness expert

and offerings, and, in turn give back to our community,” said Leonard.

Added MacDonal, “If all of us give a little bit, then nobody has to give a lot.”

For more information about Third Thursdays, visit Third Thursday — Paso Robles on Facebook.

### ABOUT MUST! CHARITIES

Must! Charities is dedicated to improving quality of life in San Luis Obispo’s North County by offering hope, compassion, and resources to those in need. Instead of giving charitable “handouts,” must! Charities walks alongside other local organizations to create long-term, sustainable transformation within the region. For more information, please visit [www.mustcharities.org](http://www.mustcharities.org).

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