

Celebrating history

Proceeds support city's community resource services center



JON WEIAND — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

Josue Rocha, right, and Raphael Guerra, left, play tug-o-war in Davenport during the Cinco de Mayo celebration Saturday.

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DAVENPORT » The sound of drums and horns could be heard from Highway 1 on Saturday during the annual Cinco de Mayo Festival by the Sea in Davenport, which drew hundreds of people.

In its 25th year, the festival featured an Aztec dance and a mariachi performance among a lineup of events to celebrate Mexican heritage.

The holiday celebrates the unlikely victory of the Mexican army against the French army in 1862 in a battle near the what's now the city of Puebla. But at the Davenport celebration, the celebration went beyond historical victory to supporting the Davenport community.

"It's about the community coming together," said Stephanie Flores Boyd, program director at the Davenport Resource Services Center. "It's for the people that live in the area to come and get to know the north coast, the region, the residents and be able to support the community as well."

Proceeds from the event go to support the services center, which runs youth programs, food distributions programs and an array of services.

The center struggles with staffing and financial resources, much like other programs in the county, Flores Boyd said. The funds raised from the celebration stabilize and promote all the services, she said.

The center is part of the Community Action Board of Santa Cruz County, a nonprofit organization

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A mariachi band performs during the annual Cinco de Mayo celebration in Davenport on Saturday.

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focused on combating poverty and its causes. Maria Elena De La Garza, executive director of the board, emphasized the importance of the event in bringing the community's focus to the services center.

"This is such an important event because it's about the community coming to support the services," she said.

Luz Fuentes was in charge of the food preparation and coordinating the efforts to feed the hundreds of people expected to attend. The day's menu, which featured rice, beans, a salad and enchiladas was coordinated by Fuentes and a team of seasoned chefs.

She has helped with the food preparation since 1993.

"Once I got married, I moved to this town and it was a place where I got help with a lot of services," she said. "I got an opportunity



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An Aztec dance group performs at the annual Cinco de Mayo celebration in Davenport on Saturday.

to work here so I just feel like it's a part of my role. Giving back to the community that gave me a hand when I was younger."

Though she ran back and forth from the kitchen to the serving tables, she was happy to help, likening the event to a family affair.

"When we have a quinceañera or a wedding, all of your family gets together and you cook. That's how it feels here," she said. "Ev-

everyone is just bringing in what they know and what they do."

Bill Henry, of Davenport, brought his 2-year-old daughter to the festival. The family had moved there eight months before and had yet to experience the event.

"I think it's a great way of celebrating the Mexican heritage," he said.

He also added it was a great way to support the resource center.