# The Empty Bowls Movement Project, JCCC

**What is it?**

Founded by Lisa Blackburn and Art teacher John Hartom in 1990-91 when they joined a drive to raise charitable funds in his [Michigan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michigan) community. Hartom’s idea was to organize a charitable event to give artists and art students a way to make a personal difference. Hartom’s students made ceramic bowls in their high school art classes. ***The finished products were then used as individual serving pieces for a fund-raising meal of soup and bread***. Contributing guests kept the empty bowl. During the next year, Hartom and other participants developed this concept into “Empty Bowls”. The Imagine/RENDER Group, a 501©3 organization, was created to promote the project.

# How is JCCC going to host an Empty Bowls Event? When?

JCCC Ceramics program, in conjunction with the JCCC Culinary Program, are largely coordinating this event through organizing the bowl-making and the food preparation efforts. However, students and staff around the college are already contributing as part of a team, and any others are welcome to encourage students to partake in projects through the JCCC Honors Program or extra credit to help efforts needed for the event (like designing the posters/ logo, providing some insight into one or more of the countries featured to discuss at the dinner) or simply to carry out a research project. The dinner will take place in November, 2017.

**What kind of food will be at the dinner? Where will money go? Can I try the food but not buy a bowl? Are the Bowls durable?**

There are three themes that will be part of the Empty Bowls dinner gala at JCCC-The Street cuisine and Pottery themes from Three countries: Uganda, Vietnam, and Mexico. Ticketholders will choose in advance what meal they wish to purchase, and then choose a bowl from that country category when they arrive at the dinner. Bowls will be displayed on a table prior to the dinner so that ticketholders and non ticketholders can see the bowl exhibit that day. Bowls will be made in one of the three themes: **Pottery and Patterns of Mexico, Pottery and Patterns of Uganda, and Pottery and Patterns of Vietnam.** *Bowls will be made in a joint effort by members of the larger JCCC community as well as JCCC students in the Ceramics Department.* They will all be food safe and cleaned prior to being used. Proceeds from ticket sales will go toward the JCCC food pantry and the JCCC International Hunger Relief Program***. Each ticket will also buy a meal for a student who wishes to try the “street food” during a lunch period earlier that day, but doesn’t plan to or cannot to attend the gala/ fundraiser.***

# How can I make a bowl if I am not in a Ceramics class?

Please email Laura Gascogne at [lgascogne@jccc.edu](mailto:lgascogne@jccc.edu). If you wish to donate your time and effort into this project, we will ask that you sign up your commitment (such as two bowls), whether you’re going to need materials (or use your own), and give you the bowl makers guideline sheet. Fridays in the Spring Semester will be provided for bowl contributors to make or paint the bowls using pattern suggestions. If you aren’t registered in a Ceramics class, you won’t be able to use equipment due to liability, but you will be able to help make bowls using the press-mold method, or you can simply paint one of the bowls using suggested patterns that will be provided.

**Empty Bowl Makers Guidelines:**

If you are making bowls for the Empty Bowls Project, we first want to say, “THANK YOU!”

There are just a few guidelines we have to follow since this event is going to be part of a ticketed, fundraising dinner theme, and keep in mind---the bowls are planning on being used, so they must be **FOOD SAFE**. When in doubt, Please ask! We also need to know who will be making bowls for us, and want to give credit to contributors, which is why we need you to SIGN UP. We will ultimately need at least 200 bowls and this will also help us track the number of bowls getting made.

**The Cuisine**

Ticket buyers for this fundraiser will choose in advance what country’s dish they want to eat for the dinner. They will choose between **Vietnam, Uganda, and Mexico**. The latter two were chosen since JCCC already has exchange programs/ charitable coursework arrangements in those countries. Vietnamese phở was chosen because it will be a suitable, but simple dish for folks who want an Asian-based dish that works well for vegetarians or non-vegetarians alike. Also, Vietnam has a rich history of ceramics recently revitalized by government programs after being dormant for the last century. The original intent/ purpose behind cuisine for Empty Bowls events was to emulate simple, everyday “street” food of everyday people in developing countries or disadvantaged areas. These are NOT fancy meals. This gives those partaking in the meal an opportunity to appreciate and have empathy with communities that have less, where hunger is often present, but nonetheless practice nutritional resourcefulness and creativity using available ingredients. In Mexico, for example, the main staple food is beans and rice, usually served with a garnish and spices. Everyday food in Vietnam, on the other hand, is often a noodle dish in broth called phở, usually served with a protein and garnished. The cuisine of Uganda is somewhere in between the idea of an American stew/ Vegetable soup and Indian meat/ vegetable curried dishes; the bread eaten with meals is even called a chapatti as it is in India. Since the meal of a particular country might end up selling more tickets, it is necessary that more than enough bowls (spread evenly between the cultural references of Uganda, Vietnam and Mexico) will need to be made.

**Steps for Bowl-Makers:**

1.) **Please SIGN UP on the Bowl-Makers commitment Sign-up sheet**. Please indicate *how many Bowls* you are willing to make, whether you *need or are providing* your own clay/ materials. We will provide you will materials if you need it. If you are painting bowls/ decorating only, we will have a sign-up sheet as well. We need to track how many bowls in each category we have so we get a more or less even distribution.

2.) **Clay Materials:** **Laguna Brand B-Mix with grog ^5/6, or Aardvark Brand SRFG Red ^5/6** ---ALL CONE 5/6. Underglazes, Slips. We will provide all of this if you cannot.

3.) **Bowl Making Parameters:**

**Bowl size/ Shape**: My general guideline for the sizes of these bowls is “Generous Cereal/ Soup Bowl” size. Like the soup and salad bowls at Panera. The bowls do not have to be round, but they should be neither too heavy/clunky NOR fragile... They can be square, or whatever. They should be made as simple forms with the forethought of **function** **, the country’s cuisine** and the **referenced cultural style/ pattern** in mind. When considering, Ask yourself: Would YOU want to use this bowl, or would you be comfortable allowing someone else to use it?

**Weight**: About 1 ½ -2 lbs. clay for EACH bowl. (If you are just painting a bowl, this will not apply)

**Design**: Please Observe the suggested designs borrowed from the cultures being represented at the dinner and choose a theme for each bowl you create or paint: **Ugandan designs, Mexico Folk pottery designs, or Vietnamese pottery designs** are provided. Feel free to take creative liberty with these, but please do not incorporate content that might be overtly offensive.

*(We will need to be able to recognize the country your bowl(s) represent)*

**-Designs may be stenciled, traced, freehand drawn, or carved (into leatherhard clay only)**

***-Try to avoid putting excessive texture on the inside. It makes eating and cleaning difficult.***

***-The Inside MUST be glazed INSIDE with a food safe glaze. I suggest using an underglaze color with a clear topcoat over it so the underglaze design is visible.***