

My Journey with the EDC Chamber

By Melissa Calvert

My journey with the El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce began in November of 2015.

My very first mixer was at the Carey House Hotel where I won the “Pot of Gold,” which put \$300 in my pocket! At my first luncheon I received my plaque and was seated at the New Member’s Table of which I now host. By the end of the luncheon I had found myself agreeing to come to the next Diplomat meeting... and the rest is now history.

In the last four years my business has grown exponentially along with my friend base. I am now moving into a studio space on Main Street, fulfilling a dream that I have had for the past 15 years. I’m sharing the space with a fellow photographer, Rosanne Sax, whom I met through the Chamber.

In 2017, I was fortunate enough to be a part of Leadership El Dorado, a yearlong class that meets every month. Leadership gave me an up close and personal view of our County, and I met some incredible people along the way.

At the end of the year, each class is tasked with coming up with a community project. Our class picked the FFA program at Union Mine High School, specifically, to raise funds to build a much needed Hog Barn. This is where “Farm to Pork” was created.

The City of Placerville gave us permission to create an open-air restaurant atop the 3rd floor parking garage. Six of the best chef’s and wineries in our County joined the cause and created the most incredible six- course, family-style dinner many have ever had.



photo by Melissa Calvert, Vintage Photography

resources to get the Hog Barn built and then some.

So as the saying goes, “You get what you give.”

I made a commitment to myself. I committed to saying “Yes” to all the opportunities that the Chamber offers. I showed up, I mingled, I made connections, I volunteered. I believe that the Chamber has done way more for me than I have for it. And, I will continue to show up, to mingle, to connect and volunteer. —

Melissa Calvert is a local photographer and owner of Vintage Photography

Looking back on this accomplishment continues to bring up a lot of emotion in me. In addition to running my own business, I had taken on the task of running this fundraiser and it was huge. Honestly, it was something I never thought I could be capable of doing.

Here is the truth. I was nervous because there were a lot of “asks” going on. Little ol’ me was asking a lot of our local businesses to believe in a concept that had not been proven yet. We were asking for people to dig deep into their pockets for a pricey event ticket or sponsorship.

However, I believed in the chefs we had assembled. I knew they had what it took to blow the socks off our guests. And they did. “Farm to Pork” raised a hefty \$47,000.

Because I had the backing of the Chamber—in friendship, in knowledge and in connections—I was confident in the pursuit of creating something that we could pass on to the FFA program and Union Mine High School. Something that will continue to bring in the much needed



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