

CHILI COOK-OFF

## Big winner in chili cook-off: Napa Valley Food Bank

Nonprofit receives \$10,000



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The fifth annual Chili Cookoff in downtown Napa filled the air with the scent of peppers roasting and various varieties of meat sizzling on the grill.

This year's event, on Aug. 3, hosted by the Napa Valley real estate community along with the North Bay Association of Realtors, benefited the Napa Valley Food Bank again and featured chili tasting provided by 16 contestants from local real estate companies, restaurants, businesses and private citizens who love chili and competing for the title of Chili Champion of the Napa Valley.

Each contestant provided more than five gallons of chili to serve the hungry crowd.

This year, about \$10,000 was raised for the food bank, a substantial increase from last year's \$7,000 in donation, according to a news release.

Returning to judge this year were:

- La Toque owner and chef Ken Frank.
- Betty Teller, food columnist for the Napa Valley Register.
- Manny Yajeya, sommelier at Celadon Restaurant.
- Pat Burke, four-time Napa Barbecue Battle champion.
- Alfredo Pedroza, Napa City Council member.

The five judges had the task of picking the best chili from 16 versions of one of America's favorite foods. In the end, seven chilis rose to the top, and of those, three winners were selected.

First place was taken by Downtown Joe's, headed by General Manager Bobby Cabrera and bartender John Herkins. Familiar with top honors, Downtown Joe's won the first-place honor in the first cook-off in 2009. Its entry, named "Out of This World Chili," lived up to its name.

In second place was Pacific Union Real Estate, headed by David Bridges, who is also no stranger to the top lineup, as the winner of best chili in 2010 and 2011 and the People's Choice

winner in 2012. The chili, named “People’s Choice Chili,” was a crowd-pleaser.

Third place went to a first-time entrant, the Cooke family, with “Cooke’n BBQ Chili.” The couple and their children dished up a delicious pot of chili, according to the judges.

The People’s Choice winner was first-time entrant Strong & Hayden Commercial Real Estate. Its “Par Tee Chili” and golf-themed booth, plus a little help for their friends, gave them the honor of the public’s favorite chili.

The Best Booth Award went to another first-timer, Paramount Equity Mortgage.

Judged by Mayor Jill Techel, whose job was made more difficult this year by many decorated booths that included an Oakland Raiders-themed booth, one providing pony rides for kids and the Paramount Equity booth, covered with red hot peppers.

Platinum sponsor for this year’s event is the Napa Valley Publishing Co. Gold-level sponsors are the North Bay Association of Realtors, the city of Napa, Downtown Joe’s and DPI Beverage.

Event co-chairs, Realtors Karen Cherniss and Liz Kirkaldie, said they were pleased with this year’s event.

“We had a very successful event and are pleased with the response by the public that will result in a donation of approximately \$10,000 to the local food bank,” said Cherniss. “This is a great venue for the real estate community to work with our Napa neighbors to help those who may be less fortunate than others. We want to thank all of our generous sponsors, contestants and volunteers. It takes a village to put on an event like this; we also thank the public for coming out and supporting the cook-off again this year.”

## **To learn more**

[TheNapaChiliCookoff.com](http://TheNapaChiliCookoff.com)