

Culinary Celebration Chefs cooking up funds Sunday for CEF

By Christina Rowland
Staff Writer

Chefs certainly know how to throw a party.

Once a year, chefs from around the area gather in Southlake to volunteer time and offer a variety of creations during Culinary Celebration, an event to raise funds for the Carroll Education Foundation which allows the group to award grants to teachers to further education and scholarships to seniors.

“Before this, we did a roast of local celebrities,” Executive Director Kacy Hankins said. “This (event) brings in more people. We feature more than 30 chefs, and people are drawn to coming and sampling food.”

The Culinary Celebration takes place from 6 to 10 p.m. Sunday at the Hyatt Regency D/FW. Tickets for the event can be purchased online at carrolleeducationfoundation.com or at the door the night of the event.

The event, in its sixth year, will offer 31 chefs from restaurants including Brio Tuscan Grill, Copelands, Coal Vines, Cool River Timmaron Country Club, Bob’s Steak and Chop House and many more, according to Hankins.

“There will be a little bit of everything and we have desserts,” Hankins said.

In addition to the normal offerings, this year’s event will also have two bakeries; Delicious Cakes and Nothing Bundt Cakes, which Hankins feels will be a great addition to the event.

Hankins also said that about 75 percent of the chefs either were part of the event last year or one of the previous years.

Another component of the Culinary Celebration is the silent auction. The auction has grown so large across the past few years that it is broken up into three sections that have names that still fit with the culinary theme: silent auction café, silent auction bistro, and silent auction grill.

“We are really excited about this year and we are so fortunate to have received so many great items (for the auction) this year,” Hankins said.

One of the new items on the auction this year is a trip to Tuscany for two. The trip is a romantic getaway where the winner will have the chance to learn about Italian cooking and see the country side. Another item returning this year from Park Place Lexus is a new Lexus a month for a year. Hankins said this was very popular last year. The winner receives a lease from Lexus for one year and every month receives a new Lexus to drive for that month.

Hankins said that Culinary Celebration is their biggest fundraiser every year.

“Everything we make from this event, we are able to give back as scholarships and grants,” Hankins said. “With this one event we will be able to touch every student and teacher.”

Every school in the district benefits from the event. Last year, there were more than 1,200 people attend and it raised \$290,000. They used the money to give out 36 grants to teachers, totaling \$98,000 and ten \$1,500 scholarships to seniors. The group also sets part of the money aside in an endowment every year which, according to Hankins, is like a savings account for the foundation.

All teachers are eligible to turn in applications for the grants. In previous years, the grants have gone to pay for such things as books, greenhouses and guitars for music classes and many other things.

“We try and search out the ones (grants) that are different and innovative and teach the students in a way that the district’s normal operating budget can’t support,” Hankins said.

The grants are all looked at on an individual basis. The group is interested in what the teacher is trying to accomplish with the grants. The grants allow teachers to expand students’ traditional learning.

The money from the Culinary Celebration supports every school in the district and everyone can benefit from the grants given by the Carroll Education Foundation, Hankins says.