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Education Foundation wins Modesto's Community Brunch competition

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MODESTO --]

The Education Foundation of Stanislaus County won Sunday's Community Brunch competition and took home almost \$100,000 in prize money and donations.

The charity event, organized by Modesto entrepreneur Dan Costa, announced its winners at an award ceremony Thursday evening. Five area nonprofit groups were pitted against one another with the help of local chefs at a large brunch gathering at John Thurman Field.

The Education Foundation, which raises money for programs including Academic Decathlon, Science Olympiad, Foothill Horizons summer camp and the YES Company theater program, received \$99,500 in ticket sales and prize money.

Chef John Surla of Surla's, who cooked for The Education Foundation, was crowned the chef winner of the event and won \$3,000.

The charities were judged individually from the chefs, based on ticket sales, silent auction, in-kind donations, food presentation, service and entertainment.

The rest of the charity winners and prize and donation amounts were:

Second place: The Stanislaus County Police Activities League (\$74,467)

Third place: Promise Scholars at California State University, Stanislaus (\$22,298)

Fourth place: (tie) The Salvation Army's Red Shield Center (\$32,500) and First Tee of the Central Valley (\$20,200)

Nearly \$250,000 was raised in total for the event, including the \$100,000 in prize money. But Costa said the event was about more than the dollars.

"We raised a lot of money for a lot of great charities, but there was a tremendous exposure for some of these charities with low exposure in the community," he said. "And as important as the money was, everyone had a really good time, not only the charities and the chefs, but the guests had a great time."

About 3,000 people attended the event, including local law enforcement officers, who were invited to the brunch for free. Some 2,400 tickets were sold.

The chefs competed separately for \$10,000 in prize money. With Surla taking first, the remaining rankings and prizes were: second to chef LeRoy Walker, cooking for PAL (\$2,500); third to chef Vincent Alvarado, cooking for First Tee (\$2,000); fourth to chef Jesse Layman, cooking for Promise Scholars (\$1,500); and fifth to chef Stanley Dimond, cooking for the Red Shield Center (\$1,000).

Costa said he was pleased with the response to The Community Brunch and already has had people asking him when the next one will be.

"I was expecting as good as an event as we had and I think it has its abilities to be an annual event," he said.

Bee staff writer Marijke Rowland can be reached at mrowland@modbee.com or (209) 578-2284.



ELIAS FUNEZ/efunez@modbee.com Modesto's Dan Costa dishes up omelettes along with other volunteers at the Stanislaus County Police Activities League's brunch booth at John Thurman Field where over 2,000 omelettes were served to Community Brunch attendees. - Modesto Bee - Elias Funez