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### **LOCAL RESTAURANTS THROW DOWN IN THE ULTIMATE CHILI SMACKDOWN**

***6th Annual SoNo Fest & Chili Cook-Off Features Chili, Beer, Shopping and Music to Benefit Education***

SAN DIEGO, CALIF. (November 1, 2015) The 6th annual SoNo Fest and Chili Cook-off – December 6, 2015 from 11am to 5pm at 32nd & Thorn streets – gives San Diegans a chance to buy local, eat local and drink local, all for a good cause.

This free holiday event, presented by San Diego Ceramic Connection and the McKinley Elementary School Foundation, promises award-winning chili as local restaurants (including BFD, The Blind Burro, Blind Lady Ale House, Brabant, Bub's At The Ballpark, Cafe Madeleine, Carnita's Snack Shack, City Tacos, Deck at Moonshine Flats, Eclipse Chocolat, Fathom Bistro, Hamiltons, Hope 46 at Lafayette Hotel, The Haven, Kensington Cafe, Kindred, Lucha Libre, Monkey Paw, Panchita's Kitchen & Bakery, Panama 66, Quad Alehouse, Rebecca's, Ritual Kitchen, The Safehouse, Sipz, Small Bar, Soda & Swine, South Park Abbey, South Park Brewing, Starlite, Station Tavern, Streetcar, Tiger! Tiger!, Toronado, True North, UpTown Tavern, Underbelly, Urban Solace, Waypoint Public and West Coast Tavern) face off for chili bragging rights to prove for another year who reigns supreme!

A panel of San Diego celebrities, including Council Member Todd Gloria, Master Chef Junior Winner Nathan Odom, craft beer and North Park supporter Omar Passons and more, will be on hand to judge the 40 restaurant entries.

The event is free and everyone is invited to sample the chili entries and vote for their favorites. \$20 buys five restaurant chili tastings in a handcrafted ceramic bowl; for \$35 dollars patrons can enjoy 10 chili tastings along with a ceramic bowl.

"This event has evolved from a small group of friends and patrons gathering to eat chili and have a good time into a major street festival and fundraising event to benefit McKinley," said Kouta Shimazaki, owner of San Diego Ceramic Connection, "The people in our community have really pulled together to make this a success and that's something I'm proud to be part of."

The festival, held in the heart of San Diego's South and North Park neighborhoods at 32nd & Thorn, will also feature beer and wine from local breweries and vineyards, an assortment of food trucks, unique

holiday gift shopping from 30 local artists and craft vendors and live music on two stages. Kids can enjoy a children's fun fest area complete with carnival games, bounce houses, hairdos and face painting, mini ping-pong tournament and more.

Bar Pink and The Casbah will sponsor two live music stages to keep the crowd dancing throughout the day. Bands will include Shawn Rohlf & The Buskers, The Creepy Creeps, G Burns Jug Band, The Bed Breakers, Unsteady, The Nards, Schizophonics, Ypsitucky, Trilduster, Triumph of the Wild and the Downs Family.

A holiday staple for many, drawing approximately 18,000 people from around San Diego and surrounding areas, SoNo Fest is organized and produced entirely by McKinley parent volunteers—including 25 committee members who volunteer their time on the event year-round and more than 300 volunteers on the day of the event.

"I'm thrilled to be part of this community where parents give back so much time and effort" said McKinley principal Deb Ganderton, "This event helps us give McKinley students access to the arts, music and Spanish, which are important components for us to offer in order to sustain our International Baccalaureate status."

Generous support from sponsors including San Diego County Credit Union, Waypoint Public House, Buona Forchetta, Community Realty Co., Xerox, Target Express and Thorn Street Brewery help make this school fundraiser-turned-major street festival a success year after year.

For a complete list of restaurants, celebrity judges, bands, vendors, food trucks, sponsors and event information visit [sonofestchilicookoff.com](http://sonofestchilicookoff.com), follow @sonofestchili on Twitter and Instagram @sonofest, or like us on Facebook ([facebook.com/SoNoFestandChiliCookOff](https://facebook.com/SoNoFestandChiliCookOff)).

**San Diego Ceramic Connection**, a fully outfitted ceramics studio and gallery, was established in 1997 by Master Japanese potter, **Kouta Shimazaki**. The studio offers three-hour classes, six days a week, with an open studio every Friday for all students. Kouta teaches his unique Japanese techniques in pottery in a group setting with individual attention each session. He also teaches ceramics at McKinley Elementary and St Augustine High School.

**McKinley Elementary School** is an IB world school in San Diego's North Park neighborhood. After years of cuts to education, schools like McKinley rely on community support to fund programs that would not otherwise be available. The SoNo Fest & Chili Cook-Off is an all-volunteer event put on by McKinley families to provide funding for the arts, music and Spanish programs.

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