

Youth Initiates Chile Temple Fundraiser

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Friday, 09 March 2007
Last Updated Thursday, 03 May 2007

It all started with a suggestion from a youth. During the Houston community's 19 Day Feast, Seena Monjazez recommended that the community contribute to the Chile Temple Fund. The suggestion was taken to the Local Spiritual Assembly, which approved the idea and responded to Seena with a much bigger task. Seena and Afshin, friends from Friendswood, Texas, were asked to organize a fundraiser to unite the Houston area in raising money for the Temple of Light. Seena and Afshin immediately accepted the challenge and got to work hosting a "Chili for Chile Cook-off" for the community.

The plan for the fundraiser was for teams representing communities in the area to enter their chili into a taste testing contest. Members of the different communities were invited to taste each chili and vote on the chili that they believed tasted the best.

Word spread quickly and the communities of the Greater Houston Area responded enthusiastically. Teams were formed and the friendly battle for the title of "First Annual 2006 Chili for Chile Cook-Off Champion" was on. On a sunny November day a total of 100 people from five communities were represented in the cook-off, including Houston, Southeast, Northwest, League City, and Pasadena. Those who were not able to make it to the cook-off generously sent in their contributions, which soon poured in from all over the area.

The title of Chili Champion went to the team from Houston, who were given a plaque to congratulate them on their hard work, but in truth everyone was a winner that day.

Thanks to the encouragement and sponsorship of Southeast Harris County, the generosity of the Greater Houston Community, and the hard work of the Local Spiritual Assemblies and two energetic Baha'i youth, the fundraiser was a great success with a total amount of \$3,000 raised for the Chile Temple. The leftover chili was taken from the fundraiser to a local Houston-area homeless shelter and given to the less fortunate. This fundraiser was just one of the many signs of the generosity, unity and love of the Bahá'í community and how it comes together to achieve common and important goals.