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For 25 years, Chocolate Fantasy has supported the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside

The nonprofit's signature fundraising event is Saturday, Feb. 9



A flyer from the first Chocolate Fantasy, a signature fundraiser for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside. The event celebrates its 25th anniversary on Feb. 9, 2019. (Courtesy image)

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The Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside will celebrate the silver anniversary of its signature fundraiser, Chocolate Fantasy, on Saturday, Feb. 9.

For the past 25 years, the annual event has raised much-needed dollars to support the nonprofit's year-round efforts to provide after-school and summer programming for

children in several communities, including Redlands, San Bernardino and Riverside. Tickets are still available.

“I think it’s fantastic that it’s lasted 25 years,” said Mike Reynolds, who co-chaired the first Chocolate Fantasy with Kathy Shomaker.

Past guests enjoy champagne at Chocolate Fantasy, a signature fundraising event for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside. The event celebrates its 25th anniversary Feb. 9, 2019. (Courtesy image)

Reynolds, Shomaker and others developed the fundraiser in the mid-1990s to support the nonprofit, which had been struggling financially, said P.T. McEwen, club CEO.

That first year, the event had a champagne component to it – it was then known as the Chocolate and Champagne Fantasy. Since 1995, the event has expanded its offerings, adding additional eats and fundraising opportunities, including big-ticket items such as trips aboard and hard-to-get tickets to Broadway musicals.

The fundraiser, added McEwen, “is a signature event not only for the Boys & Girls Clubs, but I would argue that it’s a signature event for the community as a whole.”

Since its inception, Chocolate Fantasy has raised thousands of dollars each year. The 2018 event generated more than \$100,000 for the first time in its history, an amount McEwen said he expects this year’s endeavor to surpass.

Tickets for the event are \$100 per person and available online at begreatie.org or at the Hansberger Clubhouse, 1251 Clay St., Redlands.

Attendees will receive unlimited samples of dishes from Greensleeves Steakhouse, The Mitten, Michelle’s Bakery and Mill Creek Cattle Co. Silent and live auctions are additional highlights, with a trip to Rome and Tuscany, tickets to see “Hamilton” on Broadway in New York City, and tickets to see Paul McCartney live in Las Vegas up for grabs.

In addition, the event will include complimentary valet parking for guests and live music. New this year are bags with donations from participating and supporting businesses, some of which have been a part of the fundraiser since the first year.

The contributions from those vendors, said McEwen, “reflects what the community values and that’s investing in the kids because – after all – it’s all about the kids.”

Chocolate Fantasy will once again take place at The Mitten Building, 345 N. Fifth St., in downtown Redlands, and is open to guests 21 and over. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Saturday. The event runs 7 to 11 p.m.

To learn more, call 888-822-6535.