

# 25th Chocolate Fantasy sets record, raising more than \$150,000 for Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside



Redlands Police Chief Chris Catren, left, talks with Jeff and Julie Dill at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside's 25th annual Chocolate Fantasy at the Mitten Building in Redlands. (Photo by La Ti Da Studios)

By **STAFF REPORT** | Redlands Daily Facts  
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The Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside's 25th annual Chocolate Fantasy raised more than \$150,000.

That is a record for the event, a fundraiser to support club programs, according to a press release from the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside.

When the event started 25 years ago, it helped stabilize the club financially, according to the press release. It was first held at the Edwards Mansion in Redlands, then Orton Center at the University of Redlands before moving to the Mitten Building in Redlands in 2001.

More than 250 people attended this year's event, held Feb. 9 in the Mitten Building. This year's Chocolate Fantasy included longstanding traditions such as auctions and food from local businesses, and some new touches such as complimentary valet, photo booth, swag bag and signature cocktail.

Boys & Girls Club members welcomed guests at the door, and volunteers from groups including Assisteens, National Charity League, Inland Empire Job Corps and Nike volunteered at the event.

Attendees bid in live and silent auctions and danced to the music of the B.O.E. (Best of Everything) Band.



Redlands City Council Member Paul Barich, standing, bids during the live auction at the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside's 25th annual Chocolate Fantasy. (Photo by La Ti Da Studios)

Tom Kaney of Redlands sold his handmade cutting boards to benefit the club.

Food vendors included the Mitten, Parliament Chocolate, Mill Creek Cattle Co., Nothing Bundt Cakes, Jose's Mexican Food, Old Spaghetti Factory, Chef Erin's Confections and Buffalo Wild Wings. Attendees voted for their favorite restaurant,

chocolate maker and decorations. Parliament won Chocolatier of the Year, Chef Erin won Decorations of the Year and Lunch at the Mitten won Restaurateur of the Year.

Live auction items included a trip to Rome and Tuscany, tickets and a trip to see “Hamilton” on Broadway, tickets and a trip to Paul McCartney’s Las Vegas tour stop and one-of-a-kind experiences to see the Angels, Padres and Denver Broncos play and to have dinner at the Rancho Mirage home of philanthropists Tim and Carol Rochford.

The event’s anniversary sponsor was the Ramos and Ramirez family, and Grand Chocolatier sponsor was ADP.

Ray Watts, associate vice president for development at the University of Redlands, was the live auctioneer. He also co-hosted the event with KVCR 91.9 host Lillian Vasquez.

“We’re grateful for all the board members, volunteers, local businesses, dignitaries and staff who made Chocolate Fantasy such a success over 25 years,” said P.T. McEwen, chief executive officer of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside, in the press release.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Redlands-Riverside has served the Inland Empire since 1967 and has sites in the communities of Corona, Loma Linda, Mentone, Moreno Valley, Redlands, Riverside, San Bernardino and Victorville. The clubs serve more than 3,000 youth daily in after-school settings and offer winter and summer camps.

For information, go to [www.BeGreatIE.org](http://www.BeGreatIE.org).