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South Side Mid-Winter Soup Contest to benefit Brashear Food Pantry

*Feb. 18 soup hop to include “souper” sales
and award South Side’s Best Soup honors*

What’s the perfect cure to brighten a cold, Pittsburgh winter day? Hot soup! Especially when chefs from various South Side restaurants compete for “Best Soup” honors, while you “soup hop” to over 20 local shops and enjoy great sales. From 12-4 p.m., shoppers on and around East Carson Street can indulge in original recipes such as Halo Café’s Sweet Onion Bisque or Piper’s Pub’s Creole Crawfish Chowder and then vote for their People’s Choice favorite.

How the Soup Contest works

Participating shops will feature delicious soups from neighborhood restaurants and offer great deals in their stores. Shoppers can begin at any of three starting points, including South Side Works (2629 East Carson St.), WYEP FM (67 Bedford Square), or The Brashear Association (2005 Sarah St.), where they can donate \$5 and a canned good (or \$7 without a can). At this point, shoppers will receive event maps and a People’s Choice ballot that will enable them to sample the soups all afternoon, either on foot or by hopping one of Molly’s Trolleys, which is providing free transportation between sites. Awards for “Best Soup” will be given in two categories: People’s Choice and Judges’ Choice.

The official judging begins at 3 p.m. at The Brashear Association, 2005 Sarah Street, where a panel of food critics and local soup aficionados will select the Judges’ Choice winner and ballots for the Peoples’ Choice award will be tallied and announced. Prize raffle winners also will be announced at the judging.

Event benefits Brashear, local families, and South Side businesses

Proceeds generated the day of the event will benefit The Brashear Association Food Pantry, which serves approximately 300 families each month. Last year's Soup Contest helped stock Brashear's shelves with soups and stews for over two months.

"Food drives are important during the winter months because so many people have to choose between eating and heating their homes," explains Christine Gaus of the Brashear Association. "Brashear is grateful for the support of the South Side business district. Together, we can make a difference in many people's lives this winter."

The event also benefits participating businesses during a month that is traditionally slow in outdoor retail activity. Following the 2005 Soup Contest 40% of participating businesses reported an increase in sales, and 82% reported an increase in foot traffic. Anecdotally, several businesses said that the event generated the most single-day foot traffic they had ever received.

The South Side Mid-Winter Soup Contest is presented by South Side Local Development Company, a non-profit community development corporation committed to the historic preservation and economic development of Pittsburgh's South Side.

Panel of Judges

Chris Fennimore, *QED Cooks* and Honorary Chair, South Side Mid-Winter Soup Contest

Nancy Anderson, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*

Hugh Brannan, *The Brashear Association*

Jim Eiben, *Iron and Glass Bank*

Nancy Eshelman, *Morning Glory Inn*

Gaynor Grant, *Sweetwater Cooking*

Rebecca Hower, *KDKA*

Bernie Kuzma, *UPMC South Side*

Dr. Barbara Rudiak, *Phillips Elementary School*

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