

Cooking for a Cause

Many people spend their weekends relaxing at home, but one group likes to keep busy perfecting a mean bowl of chili. Father and son Rocky and Chris Mills, along with Danny Bullington, are members of the Big Shots cooking team, a ten-person group that cooks chili, barbeque, and the occasional pot of Brunswick stew for contests all over the country. They also hold dinners to raise money for many local charities.

During the weekend, Danny Bullington, the oldest member of the group and local business professional, dons his Big Shots team shirt and competes in contests all over the country, including the annual World Championship Chili Cook-Off in Terlingua, Texas. He and his teammates also hold fish fries and raffle off private dinner parties for local charities. For an organization that helped mentally challenged adults, the team held a fish fry that fed 2,000 people. In addition, Bullington and Rocky Mills are certified barbeque judges, and sometimes get to judge as well as compete. "I find that it's a great way to meet new people, help charities, and have a good time enjoying my hobby," says Bullington.

Rocky Mills, a 30-year veteran to the automotive industry and sales executive at Riverside Ford, comments that Big Shots provides him with a way to not only practice his hobby, but also share his love of cooking with others. "It gives me an opportunity not only to do something for the community, but it gives me the chance to improve my cooking skills and spend time with my son and my friends," says Rocky. For Chris Mills, a technician with Butler Lexus, it's all about quality family time. "It's a way to spend time with my dad," said the younger Mills. "We've always been real close."

Big Shots is composed of two five-man teams, including individuals from the local sheriff's department, a lawyer, and a



Chris Mills and Rocky Mills

police chief, all of whom have won an award for their dishes, which include everything from chili (made from fresh spices shipped from Texas the night before the competition) to ribs to hot wings. "If it moves, we'll cook it," says Rocky Mills. "And if you'll eat it, we'll cook it." The team also has their own trailer, which they take to their many competitions.

Local business sponsors support the team's charitable and competitive efforts. "We couldn't do it without our sponsors" comments Chris. "While we do invest monies of our own in the team, the cost of equipment, the trailer, spices, travel and competition entries require outside assistance." In return for cash sponsorships, team sponsors receive recognition on the traveling Big Shots trailer, the website, and of course the team is always available to help its corporate sponsors with cook-outs and charitable efforts. Currently, Big Shots' sponsors are Macon Iron, Silly Willy's Liquor Store, Every Day Gourmet, The Sign Store, Hart's Mortuary, and Blade Uniforms.

For these Big Shots, it's not only about winning, but also spending time with friends and loved ones and helping the community. Now that's a recipe worth remembering. For more information, photos and recipes, visit their Website at <http://members.cox.net/bigshots>.

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