



Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Taste of Hampton Roads Attracted Over a Thousand Area Foodies to Help Fight Hunger

Norfolk, VA – The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Taste of Hampton Roads hosted by The Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore, drew over 1,200 attendees to its signature fundraising event last week with the lure of delectable tastings, drink, fun entertainment and community connection. Themed, *Fabulous Foodies Fighting Hunger*, the epicurean affair dished up innovative culinary offerings designed to help raise funds and awareness. The contributions raised from the event will contribute over 560,000 meals to those facing hunger in the area.

“We are truly humbled by the level of giving at this event,” said Joanne E. Batson, CEO for the Foodbank. “At the heart of Taste are our Partners – from businesses, restaurants, community groups and individual volunteers who truly exemplify our mission of serving. In addition to cash donations, partnerships and ticket sales, the event garnered over a \$175,000 of in-kind contributions not including the number of volunteer hours that went into making the event a true mission-driven experience.”

A sold-out VIP reception served up a fast-paced Iron Chef-style competition that paired professional chefs with amateur chefs from Taste’s four top Business Partners. A special guest appearance was made by Kraft Foods, Planters Division’s **Mr. Peanut** who introduced the secret ingredient – Peanut Butter!

The competition was won by **Chef Nate Stauty, Public House Restaurant in Norfolk, assisted by Amateur Chef Courtney Dyer, General Manager of the Virginia Beach Convention Center** with their creation of **Crunchy Peanut Grits with Pan Seared Pork Tenderloin**.

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The main event sizzled with innovative food offerings from over 40 restaurants and culinary businesses, as they competed for a variety of awards. Diners enjoyed inspired-event décor donated and installed by several prominent members of the International Special Events Society, Hampton Roads Chapter, with musical entertainment provided by Strictly Bizzness, and VIP souvenir photos, casino games, DJ and electronic dancefloor provided by Astro Entertainment. Souvenir photos were also available courtesy of Boardwalk Photo Booth.

The evening's award winners included:

- Most Memorable Booth: Distinctive Gourmet at the Virginia Beach Convention Center
- Most Unique Taste: Farm Fresh Food & Pharmacy
- Most Artistic Presentation: Swan Terrace at Founder's Inn and Spa
- Best Desserts: Carolina Cupcakery
- Judge's Choice: The Culinary Institute of Virginia
- People's Choice: Westminster-Canterbury on Chesapeake Bay

Top Partners for the event included PRA Group (Presenting Partner), Sumitomo Drive Technologies, DAV Combining Chapters Thrift Stores of Hampton Roads VA, Inc., Harris Teeter and the Virginia Beach Convention Center. A complete list of Partners may be found at [www.tasteofhamptonroads.org](http://www.tasteofhamptonroads.org).

### **About the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia**

The Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore, a member of Feeding America® and the Federation of Virginia Food Banks, has been providing food for those facing hunger since 1981. To date, we have distributed over 230 million meals throughout our service area, which includes the cities of Norfolk, Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Suffolk, Franklin, and Virginia Beach as well as the counties of Southampton, Northampton, Sussex, Isle of Wight, and Accomack.

For up-to-date information on the Foodbank, find us online at [www.foodbankonline.org](http://www.foodbankonline.org); like us on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/SEVAFoodbank>; or follow us on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/FoodbankSEVA>.

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