



Dust off the sombrero: Time for a Chevys event

Grand opening at Bayfair Center to benefit Boys & Girls Club

By Martin Ricard, STAFF WRITER August 16, 2006

The fiesta is back in San Leandro.

And it's all going down at Chevys, which will be celebrating its grand opening from 4 to 7 p.m. Thursday in the southeast section of Bayfair Center with a giant fiesta and a charity tortilla toss benefiting the San Leandro Boys & Girls Club.

Known for its sizzling fajitas, signature tortillas and fresh fruit margaritas, Chevys — previously located north of the shopping center — could think of no other way to continue its tradition of "Fresh Mex" and fun than with another one of its unique traditions as a restaurant chain: philanthropy.

"As part of our grand opening, we wanted to do something for the community," said spokeswoman Linda Duke. "And the Boys & Girls Club is fairly large and needy."

Since the restaurant chain opened its first location in Alameda in 1986, giving back to the community has been a part of Chevys' philosophy, Duke added. And, with the school year about to start and bills needing to be paid, the Boys & Girls Club was chosen as the charity of choice so that the organization could also continue its services throughout the community.

"They approached us because we are a strong presence in San Leandro and because Bayfair has worked with us before," said the Boys & Girls Club's Sandra Skaug. The money raised from the event will ensure that "what we do for children in the community is worthwhile."

Last year, the chain raised more than \$1 million for nonprofits and schools nationwide, Duke said. That effort is felt in the community every time a fundraiser is held at a restaurant.

When one of the restaurants in New York was destroyed after the Sept. 11 attacks, Chevys sent buses to various cities to collect donations for the rebuilding of the ravaged location. When the buses arrived in New York and the restaurant reopened near ground zero, Chevys donated all the food and proceeds to the surrounding community.

"It's a big initiative for the company," Duke said.

Those who attend the San Leandro event on Thursday can purchase tortillas, then toss them into the Chevys bus as part of a contest, with all proceeds given to the Boys & Girls Club. Through the event, the organization hopes to raise more than \$5,000. A dollar will be donated for every fajita plate sold as well.

Throughout the evening, Chevys will host a raffle for prizes including Chevys CDs, T-shirts, free meals and more. A mariachi band will provide music during the event.

Chevys at Bayfair Center is located at 15555 E. 14th St., in San Leandro. For more information, call (510) 276-0962.