



southside place community garden

Rain Dampens THE PARTY

But Not Our Spirits

By **Julia Babcock**, resident

The problem with having garden parties in Houston is that we are subject to the ever-changing weather patterns of Texas. Months of strategizing, shopping and scheduling went into our 4th annual outdoor garden party benefit. We were optimistic that, the week after an epic flood, we had a break in the weather. Chance of rain was estimated at 20% on Sunday morning April 24. My iPhone showed a sun and cloud icon on the weather app. The tents were popped. The tables were set. The cakes were delivered. The wine and beer were being iced. The food was cooked and on its way. We were ready to roll. Unfortunately, what rolled in was a thunderstorm, coming at exactly the wrong time, shortly before the party start time.

I had written in previously promising that there would be no rain this year. I was wrong. We had no good rain out plan because we expected a large turnout of kids and families. But once again the City of Southside Place firemen came to the rescue and moved the firetrucks to the driveway so we could set up the food and drinks in the fire station. Molina's arrived with campechana and chips. The Union Kitchen donated salad and Edloe Deli provided the King Ranch casserole.

We expected only a stalwart few neighbors to attend, so the silent auction was put on hold until a later date. The do-it-yourself container gardening booth was also waylaid. However, as you can see from the photos, we had a good turnout! Vicki Piper led a nutrition lesson for the children and they tasted kale smoothies. We moved outside to the pergola as the rain let up and stayed well past sunset. Families brought Tupperware to take home leftovers and the remaining casserole and cake was fed to our beloved firemen the next day. We didn't formally take tickets

but raised about \$1,000 in donations at the door, so overall, it was a successful fundraiser.

When the weather cooperates, outdoor parties in the garden are fantastic, joyful, memorable events but, like planning an outdoor wedding, there is an inherent risk. Is it worth it? I think so. What we need, however, is a rain plan to circumvent the hour or so of "analysis paralysis" before the party deciding what to do. Next year, perhaps we can have an extra Sunday in May saved as a rain out date, reserve the courthouse lobby or clubhouse in advance, or just plan on using the fire station once again if we haven't burned our bridges with our firemen - no pun intended. Next year, if there is rain for the third year in a row, we'll be ready.

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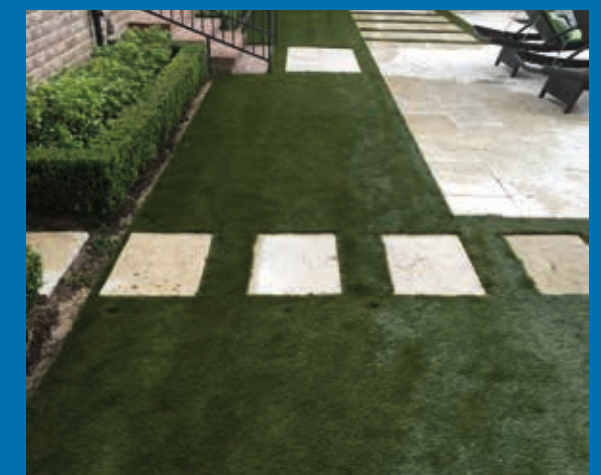
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