

# Southside Place Community Garden

## Southside Place Community Garden: A New Party Venue

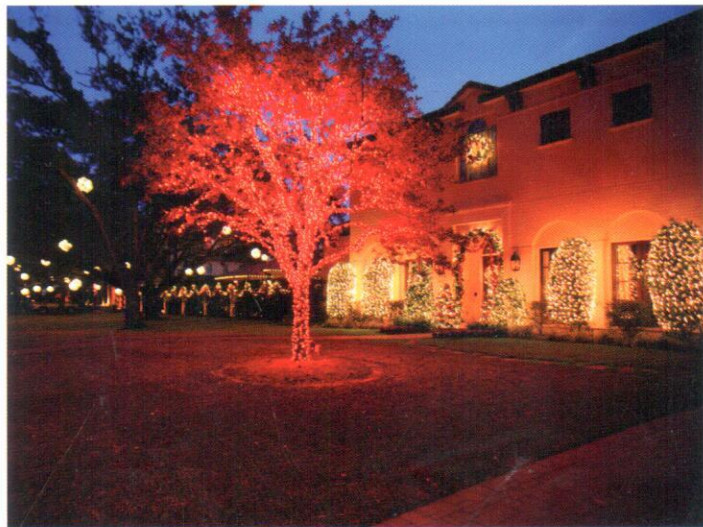
By Julia Babcock, resident

Pictures provided by: Missy Duffie and Joe Przybyl



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The Southside Place Community Garden, located next to City Hall in Southside Place, is becoming more than a place to grow vegetables. Part of the mission statement of the garden corporation is to provide a gathering place for picnics and parties. Considering the success of our most recent garden party, one may conclude, “Mission Accomplished.”

On October 19, 2014 we threw a fancy sit-down dinner for 54 guests. Modeled after the traveling *Outstanding in the Field*™ dinner party, we set the stage with a long table dressed in white in the vacant lot next to the garden. We hired Chef Soren Pedersen <http://www.chefpedersen.com/>, formerly of Sorrel Urban Bistro, now a private caterer, to plan and prepare a 5-course menu. While many chefs would balk at preparing an elaborate meal for 54 with no stove, refrigerator, or running water, Chef Pedersen didn't flinch. He fired up his propane burners, brought in coolers and executed a meal worthy of a top restaurant.

First, we mingled on the lawn with grapefruit/cranberry cocktails and passed hors d'oeuvres of bread and potato bruschetta. Then we had a brief ground-breaking ceremony for the new gazebo, donated by Lovett Homes. Larry Krim, the Lovett Homes representative for Southside Place and the new Southside Circle, under construction on Bellaire Blvd., shoveled the first earth where the new gazebo will be constructed. Next, we were seated and served chilled cauliflower soup followed by a



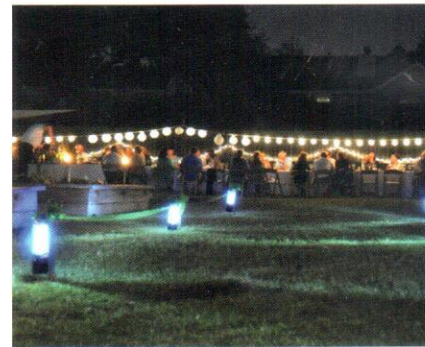
The long table held 52 guest and community garden supporters.



The food was terrific, a 5-course menu catered by Chef Soren



Chef Soren



farmers' market salad. The wine flowed, thanks to the three waiters attending to our every whim. The main courses of coffee-rubbed filet mignon, braised local chicken & grilled red snapper were served family style, along with the side dishes of grilled squash and sweet potato. Finally, as if we weren't full enough, we were served butternut squash cheesecake and apple tart.

Neighbors walking by must have been wondering, "What's going on in the garden? A wedding?" The event was stunning, pretty enough for a wedding. As the sun set, the white paper lanterns cast a lovely glow, making all guest look 10 years younger ... or maybe that was the wine?? Just wait until we get the gazebo built; then Southside Place may become THE place for outdoor weddings. Especially if the weather was as perfect as it was on October 19.

Thanks to the SSPCG members Kay Browning, Jennifer Anderson, Patty Tilton, Lisa Roy and Linda Burdine for making this event not just successful but absolutely perfect. If you missed it, don't worry. Along with the casual garden party after Easter every April, we plan to make this sit-down dinner party an annual event. What will we change next year? Other than the addition of a new gazebo for the October 2015 event, I wouldn't change a thing, except maybe the name. The dinner was more than "outstanding," it was perfect.

Join the Southside Place Community Garden! Membership is free. Just email [jbabcocktx@gmail.com](mailto:jbabcocktx@gmail.com) to join our club.

Also you may join our Facebook group: [www.facebook.com/groups/476972015691263/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/476972015691263/)

Website: [www.southsideplacecommunitygarden.org/](http://www.southsideplacecommunitygarden.org/)

*Get involved... it's a grassroots effort!*

#### **Outstanding Garden Cocktail**

- 4 ounces Absolut Citron
- 4 ounces grapefruit juice
- 2 ounces cranberry juice
- 2 ounces apricot brandy
- Dash bitters
- Fresh cranberries & mint spring for garnish
- 2 ounces Fresca or champagne

This is the cocktail that was served at the beginning of the *Outstanding Dinner in the Garden* on October 19, 2014. Shake all ingredients with ice. Pour into 2 glasses with sugared rims. Top with Fresca or champagne. Add a sprig of fresh mint. Float a cranberry on top.