

Filling up on chili for a good cause

BY DONAL O'CONNOR
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Hillside Manor was the big winner at Saturday's Heartburn fundraiser for the Heart and Stroke Foundation, clinching both the People's Choice honour and earning Best Display for its Oscar-inspired theme.

The popular chili cook-off attracted more

than 2,000 people, and the Perth County branch of the foundation exceeded its fundraising goal of \$15,000, said event coordinator Rachel Smith.

With 38 booths offering chili concoctions, several serving up more than one choice, there was no lack of variety.

Downie Optimists, for instance, offered buffalo, venison, lamb and vegetarian choic-

es. Health-conscious Stratford Kinettes were serving no-salt turkey chili. Chef Robert Knowles of Molly Bloom's was serving, in addition to a mild chili, a dangerous batch made with a litre of habanero peppers.

Stratford Lodge came up with a bacon-flavoured offering, its chefs holding back in the spice department.

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HEARTBURN DAY

Plenty of chili concoctions for adventurous tasters

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A tasting panel chose the following winners in the various categories:

Service group — Stratford Lodge;
Restaurant — Othello's; Community group — Avon Co-op Nursery; Business — Libro Financial.

The popular choice among kids was A&W.

Rick Walsh, vice-president of Stratford Optimists, was quite pleased with the chunkier chili he had cooked up and which he admitted was based on a recipe originally obtained from his brother who is a chef. Cumin and beer were included in a long list of ingredients. He added diced stew beef this year for a "stick to your ribs" consistency, he said.

Charlotte McTavish of Festival Opti-

mists was in a somewhat competitive mode, warning an inquiring taster about the cooking methods of fellow Optimists with the Downie club.

"You have to watch those guys over there you know. They use road kill," she said.

With almost 40 booths to choose from one necessarily had to limit the sampling. My own preference out of 10 or so random selections was Stratford Optimists' chunky and nicely spiced batch.

With so many possibilities, luck probably played a major part in anyone finding his or her ideal chili. Probably everyone could agree, however, that the spacious Rotary Complex community hall was a significant improvement to the crowding of past Heartburn Days at the old Coliseum.