

From the University of Mississippi Medical Center Division of Public Affairs

MEDICAL CENTER'S TASTE OF THE U PARTY TO SUPPORT PATIENT NEEDS WITH FOOD, FUN AND COSTUMES

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JACKSON, Miss. – The University of Mississippi Medical Center's homage to food and fun-raising, Taste of the U, will return for its 24th year with an extravaganza of creative, bite-sized food, wildly imaginative themes, live music and crazy costumes.

The event will fill the Jackson Medical Mall Thad Cochran Center from 7-9 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 22.

Taste of the U raises funds for the UMMC Alliance, a nonprofit charitable and social organization that serves Medical Center patient, family and facility needs.

With approximately 20 chef teams this year, Taste-goers can enjoy spectacular displays and culinary delicacies from around the world. Bet your buttered beans, this year's teams are cooking up some great entrees. Taste-goers can vote for their favorite teams to help determine the People's Choice and Children's Choice titles.

Celebrity judges include Mississippi News Now anchor Maggie Wade, chef and restaurant owner Grant Nooe and Dr. David Dzielak, director of the Mississippi Division of Medicaid. Judges will receive taste-size portions from each team and vote for the Overall Winner, first and second runner up and Best Taste.

The Overall winning team takes home the coveted Dr. Fine Swine trophy, which for years has circulated to different offices around the Medical Center.

Toy Wolfe, UMMC dietitian, will judge entries for the Heart Healthy title, and a secret celebrity judge will decide on the Best Presentation category.

Don't be fooled by the descriptor "silent" in the auction. This year's items will set the crowd screaming and streaming to the tables to bid.

Up for grabs this year is a two-night hunting trip at Belle Island in Vicksburg with three guided hunts, Saturday dinner and the guarantee of a buck.

Another stunner is the trip to the Ole Miss–Alabama football game on Saturday, Oct. 3, in Oxford. The package includes two tickets to the Chancellor's Box, parking passes and a three-room, three-night stay within walking distance of the Oxford Square and campus.

That's not the end of the University of Mississippi items. There also is a football signed by former Rebel quarterback Eli Manning and head football coach Hugh Freeze, and a pair of stadium-seat tickets to the Ole Miss-Alabama game.

Mississippi State University fans can bid on a number of autographed items, including a cowbell, a baseball, a white zip-up hoodie and a Jack Cristil book.

Other auction goodies include jewelry from Lee Michaels, an item from the Apple Store, sunglasses from the Department of Ophthalmology, a private dinner for six with Basil's chefs at your home, gift certificates from Amerigo, Anju, Babalu ,Bravo!, Fresh Market and two local photographers.

Bid on a round of golf at Reunion for four, art from Peyton Hutchinson and Dr. Mark Reed, professor of otolaryngology, and numerous boutique items.

BancorpSouth again stepped up as the event's presenting sponsor. Funds from the 2013 Taste totaled nearly \$45,000 and, in part, have been used by the Alliance to remodel the Interventional Radiology reception area with new paint, carpet, furniture and artwork. This year's proceeds will be used to renovate the Department of Radiology reception area, one of UMMC's oldest and most highly trafficked.

"We know this year's Taste of the U will be awesome," said Taste Committee Chair Laura DiStefano. "We couldn't pull off such a wild event without the dedicated support of our sponsors, silent auction donors, UMMC Catering and Physical Facilities staff members, volunteers, and most of all, the enthusiastic chef teams."

To purchase Taste of the U tickets

Cost is \$25 for adults, \$15 for students, interns and residents or \$5 for children under 12, visit www.umc.edu/alliance

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The University of Mississippi Medical Center, located in Jackson, is the state's only academic medical center. UMMC encompasses five health science schools, including medicine, nursing, health related professions, dentistry and graduate studies, as well as the site where University of Mississippi pharmacy students do their clinical training. The Medical Center's health-care enterprise includes five hospitals and University Physicians, the faculty group practice. The Medical Center's threefold mission is to educate tomorrow's health-care professionals, conduct innovative research to improve human health, and to provide the highest quality care available to the state's population. A major goal of the Medical Center is the improvement of the health of Mississippians and the elimination of health disparities. For more information, contact the Division of Public Affairs at (601) 984-1100 or umc.edu/publicaffairs