Southern Smoke Foundation is a charitable nonprofit organization that was founded by Chris Shepherd and Lindsey Brown in 2015. It has since become Houston’s largest food and wine festival that, to date, has donated almost 1.4 million dollars to those in need. In addition to the festival, Southern Smoke Foundation also operates two new programs that allow organizations and individuals to apply for funding. Our Emergency Relief Fund provides funding to those who work in the food and beverage industry that are in crisis and are faced with unforeseen expenses that cannot or will not be covered by insurance. In addition, the Foundation funds individual nonprofit organizations who provide relief and/ or resources to their communities.
Houston’s premier food and wine festival aims to raise 400,000 for the Emergency Relief Fund and the MS Society. As always, some of the nation’s leading chefs will serve up incredible dishes, along with specialty cocktails and wine from top producers from around the world.
Co-Founder and Curator, Chris Shepherd
Midwest-raised, James Beard Award-winning Chef Chris Shepherd has helped change the landscape of the Houston culinary scene since opening Underbelly in 2012. He built the restaurant to support the Houston food community and its suppliers by buying local and drawing inspiration from the people and cultures that live in the city. Thanks to Chris’ vision and passion, Underbelly was a James Beard Award semifinalist for Best New Restaurant, was named one of the best new restaurants in the country by Bon Appetit and Esquire and was named one of 38 essential restaurants in America by Eater. Chris was named one of the 10 Best New Chefs in America by Food & Wine in 2013 and was then awarded the 2014 James Beard Award for Best Chef: Southwest.

In 2017, Chris opened One Fifth, a five-year restaurant project that changes concepts every year. He closed Underbelly in March 2018 to convert the building into Georgia James, his take on a steakhouse. He also opened UB Preserv as his culinary interpretation of Houston’s evolution. He continues to tell the story of Houston food, but without limitations of locality and whole animal butchery. He formed Underbelly Hospitality in 2018 to preserve the ethos of Underbelly—learning about diverse cultures through food. In 2019, all three restaurants—UB Preserv, One Fifth Mediterranean and Georgia James—nabbed the No. 1 spot on Texas Monthly’s list of the Best New Restaurants in Texas, and Georgia James was included on GQ’s list of the best new restaurants in America. He was a semifinalist for the James Beard Award for Outstanding Chef in 2019 and was named Robb Report’s Chef of the Year the same year. Chris’ first cookbook, Cook Like a Local: Flavors that Will Change the Way You Cook—and See the World, will be published by Clarkson Potter in September 2019.

Chris began his fine dining career at Brennan’s of Houston, where he spent seven years in the kitchen and then ran the wine program for two. He left Brennan’s in 2006 to open Catalan Food & Wine, which was named one of Esquire’s Best New Restaurants in America that same year.

Chris’ foundation Southern Smoke has donated more than $1.3 million to those in the food and beverage industry in crisis and to the National MS Society, in honor of his friend who lives with multiple sclerosis.
Co-Founder and PR Director, Lindsey Brown
Lindsey Brown launched Lindsey Brown Public Relations in 2016 to utilize her knowledge and experience to promote businesses that share her business philosophy of hard work and innovation. Prior to starting her firm, she was the public relations and events director for Clumsy Butcher, a restaurant and bar collective in Houston. Prior to joining Clumsy Butcher, Brown was director of marketing and public relations for the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau for 10 years. She launched the Where the Chefs Eat Houston Culinary Tours program—winner of the Public Relations Society of America’s Silver Anvil Award in 2011—and worked with local, regional and national media to further Houston’s reputation as a tourist destination.

Brown graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a degree in public relations. She began her career at Vollmer Public Relations in both the company’s Dallas and Houston offices. She also served as the special projects coordinator for the Houston Ballet Academy; a trained ballerina through age 18, Brown later would go on to co-found the Houston Ballet’s young professionals group, Ballet Barre, which has more than 200 members in its sixth year. She continues to support the organization as a member of the Board of Trustees and serves on the boards of Hermann Park Conservancy. She co-founded Southern Smoke in 2015.

Executive Director, Kathryn Lott
With eighteen years in nonprofit administration, Kathryn has worked for some of Houston’s most prestigious organizations such as Houston Grand Opera, Society for the Performing Arts and the Children’s Museum of Houston. She has served on the Boards of Catastrophic Theatre and Fresh Arts. She is the proud co-owner of Lott Entertainment, a creative project management and special events firm that helps support and manage special projects and events for nonprofit organizations in Houston.

As Executive Director, Kathryn oversees Southern Smoke Foundation and works diligently with applicants and committee members of the Emergency Relief Fund program, organizes various fundraisers throughout the year, and works with the Board of Directors to raise funds for and distribute money to the those in need.
Jordann Foreman, Special Events Coordinator
Katy Brittain, Staff & Scheduling Committee Head
Victoria Dearmond, Staff & Scheduling Committee Head
Holly Fabian, Silent Auction Committee Head

OUR DREAM TEAM

Nick Fine, Culinary Director
Matthew Pridgen, Wine Director
Westin Galleymore, Spirits Director
OUR DREAM TEAM

SOUTHERN SMOKE BY THE NUMBERS

Ticket Price

**GENERAL** - **$200**

**VIP** - **$350**

Number of Attendees

1,500+

Location

1100-1400 BLOCKS OF CALIFORNIA STREET (77006), 1018 WESTHEIMER, 1100 WESTHEIMER & CONNECTING STREETS (WAUGH, WAUGHCREST, & COMMONWEALTH)

Money Raised & Donated

2016 - **$281,000**

2017 - **$501,000**

2018 - **$425,000**

Money Raised in 2018

**TICKET SALES** - **$263,950**

**SILENT AUCTION** - **$183,356**

**SPONSORSHIP** - **$167,602**
Chefs Who Give: The Ones Who Throw Events

"Chefs are some of the most charitable people around. Chefs can be extremely passionate about a cause and want to use their voices and patrons as a platform to support causes that are important to them."

Why Chris Shepherd’s Southern Smoke Fundraiser Is So Awesome

"Not only has Shepherd managed to rally this enviable roster of chefs and entertainment, but he’s also enlisted the help of his entire staff, and seeing the joy on everyone’s face is one of the best parts for Shepherd. ‘We’re a restaurant with a greater purpose,’ he says."

Cash Grants Provide a Lifeline for Houston’s Restaurant Community

"Originally, Shepherd started the nonprofit foundation to raise funds for multiple sclerosis research after a friend was diagnosed with the disease. But last year, Shepherd knew that servers, cooks, and bussers would be uniquely vulnerable in the aftermath of Harvey, and decided to donate Southern Smoke’s proceeds directly to service industry professionals impacted by the storm. The organization set an aggressive fundraising goal of $500,000, and on the day of the event in October, announced that Southern Smoke had exceeded its goal by $1,000."
Southern Smoke delivers culinary star power and raises a half-million dollars

“No other Houston food event delivers quite the same mix of culinary star power, entertainment, and fundraising.”

Southerners of the Year: Chris Shepherd and the HOUBBQ Collective

“Shepherd and HOUBBQ are turning brisket into a cure.”

Southern Chefs Serving Up Goodwill to Their Communities

“Shepherd is extremely proud that this year’s Southern Smoke raised $501,000 for Hurricane Harvey relief efforts and that 139 workers, business owners and suppliers in the Houston food and beverage community who suffered losses during the storm received aid checks ranging from $1,000 to $9,000. ‘This is why we created Southern Smoke — to take care of our own.’”

How Eating Aaron Franklin’s Brisket Can Help Houston Recover

“For the third year in a row, Underbelly’s Chris Shepherd is organizing Southern Smoke, the now-annual Houston barbecue that’s making a name for itself as one of the more entertaining charity events in the food & beverage industry.”
JOIN THE SOUTHERN SMOKE FAMILY & HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE!