

Stockton team wins Santa Maria barbecue contest

Smokin' Yankees from Stockton lived up to its name and won the grand championship Saturday at the first Wild West BBQ Bash in Santa Maria.

The winning group's members included Santa Maria native Rebekah Juencke.

Twenty-two teams from California and one from Arizona competed at Preisker Park, but the event was about more than winning. It was a fundraiser for Family Care Network Inc., a private nonprofit that helps 600 foster children in Santa Barbara County.

Lauren Burleson, FCNI

community affairs coordinator, said she didn't know yet how much money was raised, but called the event a success. Proceeds will go to children's recreational needs, which aren't covered by governmental budgets, Mrs. Burleson said by phone from FCNI's San Luis Obispo office. Those needs include proms, music lessons, summer camps and other fun activities.

Local teams doing well at Saturday's barbecue competition were Santa Maria BBQ Outfitters, third place in ribs; Outlaws Chow Line from Santa Maria, fifth place in tri-tip; and R & R Catering from

Santa Maria, seventh place in chicken.

Besides watching the contest and feasting on the barbecued food, the crowd danced to the country sounds of Monte Mills & the Lucky Horseshoe Band and Blackwater Union. Families enjoyed activities including face painting and the making of balloon animals.

"You know, it was a really a fun, family day, and there was a lot of good will involved," Mrs. Burleson said.

For more information on Family Care Network Inc., call 781-3535 or go to www.fcni.org.

—Dave Mason