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MOLE & MARIACHI FESTIVAL RETURNS FOR FOURTH YEAR WITH AUTHENTIC MEXICAN FOOD, MARIACHI MUSIC, DANCING AND MORE

Benefit for Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park also Promises Art, Kids' Piñatas and a Raffle

AUG. 12, 2016—SANTA CRUZ, CA—Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks (Friends), a non-profit organization dedicated to sustaining the legacy of our local state parks and beaches, today announced its fourth annual Mole & Mariachi Festival, will be held on Saturday, September 10 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park (144 School St.) in downtown Santa Cruz. Admission to event is free; mole tasting kits will cost \$10.

A benefit for Friends in support of Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park restoration projects, including repairing adobe walls, as well educational programs, the event will feature a mole cooking competition and tasting event. Local chefs will prepare mole (a traditional Mexican sauce, sometimes made using chocolate). Mole sauces will be judged by event attendees and by a panel of local celebrity judges. The competition is sold-out, with 10 chefs signed up to participate.

Festival attendees who enjoy the mole tasting can further indulge on the rich, flavorful sauce from food vendors who will be selling mole tamales, tacos and more. The 2016 Mole & Mariachi Festival also will offer other great, local food vendors — Mission Hill Creamery ice cream, Garcia's Fish Tacos, Taqueria Lidia and others — and beverages, including beer from Discretion Brewing, wine by Santa Cruz Mountain Vineyard and chavelas, a drink made with beer, tomato juice and spices, for purchase.

The event will include live mariachi music from several regional bands, including the return of Mariachi Alma de Mexico and the group's youth band, Mariachi Juvenil Alma de Mexico. Local dance troupes Senderos and Estrellas de Esperanza will perform. There also will be a raffle and free activities for children including piñatas every hour and face painting.

A diverse array of artisans will show and sell work at the Mole & Mariachi Festival Mercado, including Artemex's display of blouses, dresses, drinkware, dolls, jewelry and other handmade items from Mexico. Watsonville upstart food maker The Green Waffle will sell prepackaged, healthy, locally made waffles. Artesanias Mexicanos, Creative Woman and Alejandro's Trade also will have items for sale.

Launched in 2013, the fourth edition of the Mole & Mariachi Festival will be solar powered, thanks to the generous support of Sandbar Solar. The festival also will strive to be a zero-waste event. The zero-waste effort is sponsored by the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County and will be implemented by The Offset Project. Attendees can make green choices when traveling to the festival, by taking advantage of the free bike valet or riding the free trolley from downtown Santa Cruz.

Event sponsors include:

Platinum level: Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County, Discretion Brewing, Good Times Newsweekly, Mariachi Alma de Mexico, Santa Cruz Mountain Vineyard

Gold level: Bonny Hawley, Cabovillas.com, Defib This, DNA Entertainment, Bonny Hawley, KAZU-FM, KPIG-FM, Lighthouse Bank, Miller Maxfield, Inc., Mission Printers, Sandbar Solar, Santa Cruz Beach Cottage Rental, Santa Cruz Community Health Centers, Georgann and John Scally, Taco Works

Silver level: Peg and Paul Danielson, Leonard Building/Ed Newman

For more information about how to get involved in the Mole & Mariachi Festival, as a sponsor or volunteer, email Festival@ThatsMyPark.org or visit www.thatsmypark.org/events/mole-and-mariachi. For more about mole, visit [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_\(sauce\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mole_(sauce))

About Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park

Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park commemorates its 25th year in 2016. It is home to the oldest building in Santa Cruz County. Built between 1822 and 1824 by local Ohlonean and Yokuts Indians, the park's signature adobe is the only remaining structure from Mission Santa Cruz, founded in 1791. One of just four adobe buildings left in Santa Cruz County — and sometimes confused with the nearby replica mission chapel — it is the only building of its kind preserved as a museum in the State of California. The adobe served as housing for Neophyte families who lived and worked at the Mission, which operated until 1834 when it was secularized. After decades of private ownership, the adobe was sold to the State of California, extensively restored and finally opened in 1991 to the public as the Santa Cruz Mission SHP.

Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks rallied the community to save Santa Cruz Mission SHP from closure in 2012. Friends funds interpretation services and a portion of park operations, and also runs the Mission ParkStore. In addition, Friends has implemented key improvements at the park, including a remodel of the patio, the opening of new interpretive exhibits, renovated outdoor cooking facilities and new hours of operation to serve local school children (approximately 2,500 third and fourth graders visit the park annually). Friends also established the Mole & Mariachi Festival, a bicultural celebration each September. The park is supported by the Mission Committee, members of which include representatives of Friends, State Parks and dedicated community volunteers.

About Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks

Celebrating its 40th anniversary in 2016, Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks is an entrepreneurial nonprofit sustaining the legacy of our state parks and beaches. Through an innovative partnership with California State Parks, and by leveraging local community support, Friends provides funding for educational programs, visitor services and capital projects. Friends is passionately dedicated to the preservation of our spectacular natural environment and rich cultural history. Friends also operates six ParkStores, offering nature- and history-themed merchandise for sale to benefit local parks and beaches. ParkStore locations include Natural Bridges, New Brighton, Santa Cruz Mission, Seacliff, Wilder Ranch and Online. Learn more at ThatsMyPark.org or via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest.

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