



For the last two years, Houston Chef Chris Shepherd and his friends have hosted a huge event to raise money for those living with multiple sclerosis. But just a couple months before this year's event, Hurricane Harvey devastated Houston with severe flooding, displacing tens of thousands of residents and causing an estimated \$190 billion in damages. Chris, his team and fellow chefs—in partnership with Legacy Community Health—switched gears to support those in the culinary and beverage community affected by the hurricane.

Just like a lot of people in this city, many have lost a lot if not everything. It's terrifying. I look at all of the devastation around and see and hear about all the cooks, dishwashers, waiters, bartenders, bussers, hostesses and everyone in restaurants are going through. Not to mention everyone in the supply chain. Our farmers, bakers, beer, wine and liquor reps, delivery drivers. It's overwhelming. We knew immediately when Harvey decided to hang out with us for way too long we had to do something. We wanted to change the focus of Southern Smoke to help out our family in the food and beverage industry. But our 501c3 cannot produce grants so we needed to find a partner that could. And then there was a sign.... actually, a real sign. It was the Legacy Community Health billboard above Blacksmith. They are our neighbors and we love them so much already (amazing organization btw). We had a meeting and Southern Smoke is officially partnering with them to provide emergency assistance to members of the culinary and beverage community and their suppliers affected by the hurricane. There will be an application process to receive funds that we're working with Legacy to develop, inspired by the Giving Kitchen model. In the meantime, we're accepting donations and encouraging those that can to purchase tickets to the event. Southern Smoke is always a great party for a great cause. We're just focusing our efforts closer to home this year.

"Right now, we need to focus on our city," said Chris Shepherd. "Houstonians are fighters, and we are going to fight for our city. It's going to take a lot to make Houston whole again. I want to bring the country together--whether you can attend this event or not--for my city, my hometown. We're Houston strong!"

Wine Above Water is honored to be able to partner with Southern Smoke in this effort, and 100% of the proceeds of our event and auction will be going to support those in the culinary and beverage community affected by the hurricane via their partnership with Legacy Community Health. Via the generosity of Paul Petronella and Chris Poldian we will be hosting a ticketed tasting and food event at Camerata and Paulie's (1834 Westheimer Rd, Houston, TX 77098) on September 24, 2017 for \$100 per person. Some Houston's finest chefs and kitchens will be donating food, and via the generosity of our beverage partners we will be pouring fine wines and beers from around the world, along with a selection of old and rare bottles that are rarely seen in the retail market. Winemakers, Top Sommeliers, and other prominent Beverage Professionals will be on hand to enlighten, entice, and make sure no glass in the house goes dry! Prominent collectors will also be bringing special selections from their cellars, and all attendees are encouraged to bring a special bottle to share should they be so inclined. On that date, we will also open our online auction which will run up to October 22, 2017, featuring 50+ items including rare and old wine, all-inclusive trips, vineyard tours and guided tasting with prominent wine professionals. More details, event tickets, and auction registration can be found at [www.wineabovewater.com](http://www.wineabovewater.com).