



## WRITING SAMPLE

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# Chocolatiers of every kind converge for Homewood Chocolate Fest

By Gretchen Heber

For whatever reason, chocolate has become inextricably linked to Valentine’s Day, and the Village of Homewood offers visitors a February opportunity to celebrate chocolate in all its forms at its 17th annual Homewood Chocolate Fest.

The one-day chocolate extravaganza — held February 17— will showcase chocolatiers of all stripes, from experienced storefront bakers to those for whom chocolating is a part-time endeavor. These chocolate lovers will have booths from which they’ll offer their gourmet confections to the 800 to 1,500 expected visitors at the H-F Park District Auditorium.

Some of these bakers will compete for the title of “Home Sweet Homewood’s Master Pastry Chef” in professional and amateur categories. In a twist, visitors to the festival — not just a staid panel of professional judges — get to help judge the contest.

“Everyone gets to share in the tasting,” said Jennifer Quirke, marketing director for the Village of Homewood. “It’s a treat for everyone.”

Lest you fear for your waistline, there’s more to the Chocolate Fest than simply eating. Throughout the day, musicians will entertain visitors, who can tango in twos or simply sit back and listen. Baking demonstrations will be offered, as will scientific demonstrations. “After all, baking is science,” said Quirke. “The two are linked; we like to turn even chocolate into a teaching moment.”

In fact, in conjunction with the chocolate festival, the nearby Homewood Science Center will host a coordinating event: “Sweet Shoppe Science and Math.” Visitors can choose from three flavorful and fun activities: a hot chocolate math facts game, an M&M balancing scale activity or test a variety of chocolate bars’ buoyancy in sink or swim experiments. The science center will also present a screening of “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory.”

Back at the chocolate festival, more activities for youngsters will be available, including the opportunity for the wee ones to express themselves with icing and sprinkles.

“We’ll have cookie decorating for the kids,” said Quirke. “They always have a great time with it.”

Quirke says Homewood residents of all ages look forward to the event each year.

“In dreary February, people want a fun day,” she said. “We throw a pretty good party around here.”