



A group of independent restaurant and bar owners have launched a unique concept—a bar where 100 percent of the proceeds are donated to charity. The Organized Kollaboration on Restaurant Affairs, or OKRA, opened the **OKRA Charity Saloon** in late 2012 in downtown Houston near historic Market Square.

The Charity Saloon evolved from a collective desire to give back to the city and revitalize downtown Houston. The concept is simple: For each drink purchased, guests receive one vote that they may cast that night for one of four charities selected by OKRA's members. The charity with the most votes at the end of the month receives the next month's proceeds. Interested charities submit applications on the OKRA website.

To date, \$143,000 has been donated to nine local charities.

About the Space

When Houston was founded in 1836, the intersection at Congress and Main was the city's primary intersection and shaped downtown Houston's development. The bar, located at 924 Congress, initially opened as the Original Casino Saloon in 1882 and remained open until Prohibition. The building has also been home to a barber shop and a jazz club. The central, oval-shaped bar is accented by exposed brick walls with gas light fixtures. The original circle arch and barrel vault ceilings are still in tact today.

Food and Drink

The approach to both the food and bar is simple. The bartenders are versed in cocktails, but because the focus is on the charitable mission, they aren't pushed to innovate new drinks. Popular drinks include the Philly Fish House Punch and Blackstrap Daiquiri. The small wine selection is curated by PSA Wines' Justin Vann (one of *Food & Wine's* 2013 Sommeliers of the Year) and Kevin Floyd of Hay Merchant manages the beer selection.

Paul Petronella from Paulie's runs the kitchen at the OKRA Charity Saloon, which offers a selection of paninis, fried okra, waffle fries with housemade condiments and chocolate chip cookies and milk.

About the Organized Kollaboration on Restaurant Affairs

OKRA was formally established in 2011 by a group of like-minded independent restaurant and bar owners to pursue community initiatives in Houston. OKRA is an independent, community-supported advocacy group with very specific views on how the industry should operate and be engaged in the community—not a general membership association for restaurants and bars.

The mission:

- Foster a general appreciation of food culture through education, innovation and diversity.
- Demonstrate the responsibilities local businesses have to their communities to pursue philanthropic efforts
- Promote progressive industry standards in the areas of hospitality, product selection and labor.
- Establish a political identity that represents the interests of independent businesses in the industry, including restaurants, bars, food trucks, producers and purveyors.
- Advocate responsible urban development.

OKRA Administration President: Bobby Heugel, Clumsy Butcher, LLC
Vice President: David Buerher, Blacksmith
Secretary: Justin Vann, PSA Wines
Treasurer: Michael Burnett, Clumsy Butcher, LLC

Leadership Council Dawn Callaway, Antidote Coffee, Black Hole Coffee House, Poison Girl Bar
Miriam Carrillo, Antidote Coffee, Black Hole Coffee House, Poison Girl Bar
Steve Flippo, Clumsy Butcher, LLC
Kevin Floyd, Clumsy Butcher, LLC
Josh Martinez, Goro & Gun
Brad Moore, Grand Prize Bar, Big Star Bar
Ryan Pera, Revival Market
Paul Petronella, Paulie's
Ecky Prabanto, Blacksmith
Scott Repass, Antidote Coffee, Black Hole Coffee House, Poison Girl Bar
Ryan Rousse, Grand Prize Bar
Chris Shepherd, Underbelly, Hay Merchant, Blacksmith
Justin Vann, PSA Wines
Scott Walcott, Antidote Coffee, Black Hole Coffee House, Poison Girl Bar
Morgan Weber, Revival Market
Justin Yu, Oxheart

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Hours 4pm-2am every day

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