



## Taco Takedown

Spring 2026  
Fundraiser

# TACO TAKEDOWN 2026

## Cook Team Packet

**Dear Friend,**

We invite you to partner with Journey U for **Taco Takedown 2026**, our Spring fundraiser hosted at **Wild Stallion Vineyards**. This family-friendly event brings our community together for great food, meaningful connection, and a shared purpose: **helping people experience healing and restoration in Christ**.

Your sponsorship directly fuels life change. Because of generous partners like you, individuals and families are finding freedom from emotional and spiritual wounds that once felt insurmountable.

## ABOUT JOURNEY U

Since 2007, Journey U has helped people break free from destructive emotional and spiritual patterns when traditional support feels out of reach. Through **Trace Modeling**, our biblically grounded, trauma-aware, self-paced program, individuals are guided step-by-step to uncover root causes, renew their minds, and walk in lasting freedom.

**Our mission is simple:** remove every barrier to healing and equip the body of Christ to live whole, confident, purpose-filled lives.

## IMPACT STORY: MICHELLE'S TESTIMONY

My name is Michelle Palmer and because of generous donors like you, I have overcome emotional and mental health challenges, in addition to the physical and spiritual challenges. I am actively seeking, processing, and doing the work every day through Journey U, with its mentors, sessions, and the Trace Modeling Curriculum.

I was an unhealthy woman in every aspect of my life. I had a specialist for everything from an allergist to a cardiologist. The days were long. I was in chronic pain, filled with depression, anxiety, chest pain, and the blood was not flowing to my heart properly. The weeks and months ahead became insurmountable packed with tests, appointments, medications, procedures, doctors, therapy, and multiple surgeries. This was what my life had become.

During this time, I was trying to grow while I was trying to heal. Trying to forgive while trying to grieve. Trying to search while trying to let go. Trying to love others while remembering how to love myself by setting and maintaining healthy boundaries. I am seeing the fruit in improved relationships and mutual respect. Today, I am walking with Him and the purposes of His kingdom and my place in it.

Thank you,  
*Michelle Palmer*

## EVENT OVERVIEW

**Event:** Taco Takedown 2026

**Date:** April 11, 2026

**Location:** Wild Stallion Vineyards

**Expected Attendance:** 250+

**VIP Tickets Available:** 50

**Event highlights include:**

- Mini taco tastings
- Local vendors
- Live music
- Silent auction
- VIP Swag Bags

## WELCOME, COOK TEAMS!

Journey U is excited to host our first-ever Taco Takedown! We are expecting 250+ attendees and can't wait to see your creativity.

## COMPETITION: MINI TACOS

All cook teams will be serving mini tacos for attendee sampling. Mini tacos are small, bite-sized tacos

(approximately 2-3 inches) designed to allow guests to sample a variety of flavors throughout the event.

## **GUIDELINES:**

- Teams may prepare one or more mini taco varieties. These can include breakfast tacos and/or savory tacos. Each team must prepare a minimum of 100 mini tacos.
- Recipes must be reasonable to recreate both at home and at the vineyard.
- All meat must be USDA grade meat. Game meat shot by yourself or family is not permitted.
- Judging will be based on taste, creativity, presentation and sanitation practices.

## **ALLERGY NOTICE:**

Many attendees have fish and/or nut allergies. Use separate utensils, boards, gloves, and clearly label “Allergy Warning” on the front of your table. Cross-contamination may result in your taco being eliminated from the competition.

## **COOK TEAM FEES**

- \$200 – Cook Teams
- Add-On: \$25 for an extra table

## **WHAT JOURNEY U PROVIDES**

- Event-wide temporary food permit
- Sanitation station (3-compartment sink)
- Hand-washing station
- Two tables for each team
- Tent
- Cook team tent number
- Trash management
- Social media spotlight
- 4 General Admission tickets

## **WHAT COOK TEAMS MUST PROVIDE**

- All cooking equipment (grills, burners, flat tops, propane, utensils, gloves)
- Food ingredients and serving supplies (including disposable plates, napkins, and plasticware)
- Extension cords if needed (Journey U will NOT provide)

- Optional team decor
- Optional additional tables

## **ICE, WATER & REFRIGERATION**

Ice will be available for purchase during the event. Water is available on-site for filling pots, containers, and sanitation needs. Cook teams are strongly encouraged to bring adequate coolers and ice to maintain proper food safety throughout the day. Refrigeration will not be provided.

## **REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

- Food Handler Certification required for at least one team member.
  - Certification must be emailed 15 days before the event.

## **EVENT DAY TIMELINE**

7:30 AM - Check-in

7:30-9:30 AM - Setup

9:30-10:00 AM - Health/Safety Review

11:00-2:00 PM - Event & Tasting

2:00-3:00 PM - Breakdown (no early breakdown)

## **LOAD-IN INSTRUCTIONS**

Tents and tables will be fully set up prior to cook team arrival. Upon check-in, each cook team will be directed to the tent assigned to them. Event staff will guide teams to the appropriate unloading zone upon arrival. Teams may unload equipment and supplies directly in front of their designated tent. Once unloading is complete, vehicles must be moved to the designated parking lot to keep the event area clear and safe for all participants.

Cook teams are encouraged to arrive at the beginning of the load-in window to allow adequate time for setup. Please follow the traffic flow instructions provided by event staff to ensure a smooth and efficient unloading process.

No cooking may begin until the Health/Safety Review has been completed and the event team has officially cleared you to start.

## AWARDS & JUDGING GUIDELINES

Cook Teams may prepare as many taco varieties as they wish; however, only two (2) taco entries per team may be submitted for judging. Awards will be given in three categories: **Judge's Choice - Breakfast**, **Judge's Choice - Savory**, and **People's Choice**.

Each category winner will receive a trophy. In addition, the winner of the **Judges' Choice - Savory Award** will earn the special opportunity to have their winning taco featured on the Wild Stallion Vineyards menu for the Spring Concert series.

### **People's Choice Voting:**

All attendees will receive a People's Choice Voting Rubric upon check-in. Guests will sample tacos, provide notes on their favorites, and select their top choice based on taste, creativity, and overall experience. At the end of the event, rubrics will be collected and tallied. The taco with the highest number of popular votes will be awarded the People's Choice Award.

## OPTIONAL PARTICIPATION

### **VIP SWAG BAG PARTICIPATION**

- Provide 55 identical items
- Max size 5x7, individually packaged
- Accepted: small merch, samples, coupons, treats
- **Deadline:** March 31, 2026

### **SILENT AUCTION DONATIONS**

Accepted items include gift cards, baskets, experiences, spa services, photography, fitness packages, travel stays, and more.

## HOW TO REGISTER

Email Journey U Events Team: [info@journeyu.org](mailto:info@journeyu.org) with the subject line: "Taco Takedown Cook Team Registration - [Team Name]".

Register online: <https://journeyu.org/taco-takedown-2026>

**Please Include:**

- Team name
- Team members + contact info
- Food Handler Certification(s)
- Extra table? (Yes/No)
- VIP Swag Bag Participation? (Yes/No)
- Silent Auction Donation? (Yes/No)

## **POLICIES AND LIABILITIES**

- **Cancellation Policy:** 50% refund available if cancellation is made before March 1, 2026. No refunds after this date.
- **Liability:** Teams participate at their own risk. Journey U and Wild Stallion Vineyards are not liable for loss, theft, injury, or damage. Teams must comply with all venue rules and regulations.
- The **deadline** to participate is March 31, 2026.

## **EVENT CANCELLATION BY JOURNEY U**

If Journey U must cancel the Taco Takedown due to extreme circumstances (e.g., weather emergencies, venue issues, public safety concerns), Journey U will:

- Provide as much advance notice as possible
- Communicate updates through email, website updates, and social media

This is a rain-or-shine event, and normal weather conditions will not result in cancellation. Tents will be provided for all teams to support operation during light rain. Only severe or unsafe weather will trigger cancellation.

Refunds are not guaranteed, as most costs for the event are paid in advance to support our nonprofit work. Depending on timing and contracts, partial refunds may be offered at Journey U's discretion.

## **WEATHER PREPAREDNESS TIPS FOR COOK TEAMS**

To ensure a smooth experience in varying weather conditions, please keep the following in mind:

- **Plan for Light Rain:** Tents will be provided, but teams may bring additional waterproof

coverings or table protection if desired.

- **Secure Equipment:** Use weights or anchors for grills, tables, and décor to prevent shifting in windy conditions.
- **Protect Ingredients:** Store food in sealed containers and coolers to maintain safety and prevent exposure to rain or debris.
- **Wear Appropriate Footwear:** The event space may become damp or muddy; closed-toe, non-slip shoes are recommended.
- **Bring Weather-Resistant Storage:** Keep electronics, paperwork, rubrics, and personal items in waterproof bags or bins.
- **Heat Considerations:** If the weather is warm, ensure proper ice and cooling methods for food safety throughout the event.

These guidelines help teams stay comfortable and maintain food safety, regardless of weather changes throughout the day.

## **THANK YOU!**

Your participation helps Journey U bring hope, healing, and restoration to the community.

## **TEAM INFORMATION (Fillable Section)**

Team Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Head Cook: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Team Members (up to 4): \_\_\_\_\_

Food Handler Certification ID (If you have it already): \_\_\_\_\_

Extra Table: Yes \_\_\_\_\_/No \_\_\_\_\_

VIP Swag Bag Participation: Yes \_\_\_\_\_/No \_\_\_\_\_

Silent Auction Donation: Yes \_\_\_\_\_/No \_\_\_\_\_

# AGREEMENT AND SIGNATURES

By signing below, the cook team agrees to the above terms and conditions.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Organizer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_