

# BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

## Chicho Boys

### Your Non-Profit Alternative for Local Produce

By Isa Fernandez

Isa Fernandez, MPA is a business alliance program manager at Westside Development Corporation, advocate of the disenfranchised and a freelance photographer.

As a nearly-vegan Latina who works promoting small businesses in the downtown area, I am always on the look-out for businesses that sell locally-sourced fresh produce (like mango cups, avocados, fresh garlic and guava!) at fair prices. Chicho Boys Fruit Market, located at 1631 S. Laredo Street, exceeds that criteria in spades. Family-owned and operated since 1995, Chicho Boys is a Westside legacy business began by

Patricio Gonzalez, (known as "Chicho") whose plan was to create an "economical alternative to shopping for fruits and vegetables." Still in operation all these years later by his children John, Paul, Nando and Gina, the store is indeed an alternative to the larger corporate supermarkets in town.

Going there is always an experience. There is an outside portion of the market and an inside, which is chilled to keep produce crisp and fresh. Atop the produce counters rest traditional Mexican décor, including talavera mariachi frogs, aged wagons and black and white photos of the Gonzalez family which line the walls even

higher, honoring the history of the market. The staff are friendly and knowledgeable. General Manager Gilbert Weaver is a wealth of information about the family history, the products sold in the store and about how fruits and vegetables are grown, even detailing a recent visit to a pineapple plantation in Hawaii, still awe struck (I'm

adding this to my travel plans). He also shared referrals to juicers in town, ultra-marathon, triathlon and general running clubs and of course, information on the benefits of the fruits, vegetables and spices sold. Additionally, he relayed the many incentives to shopping at Chicho Boys – they take competitor's coupons and offer a standard 10% off discount for military, fire and police.

This dedication to family, customers and the community at large extends to its business model, as it nearly exclusively sells



products from South Texas and Mexico and other independent retailers. Included among the products are – Ladybug cookies, granola, scones and seasonal pies, Buddha's Brew beverages which use traditional fermentation methods and are handcrafted out of Austin, and jams from Arkansas



in flavors like Jalapeno Strawberry, Apple Peach or Blueberry Raspberry and paletas from San Antonio's very own El Paraiso. Mexican candy and spices from Don Juan from Laredo, Texas line the walls

from Fowler's Texas Pure Honey from La Vernia, TX is one of the increasingly popular items sold at the store - a spoonful of locally sourced honey is said to stave off allergies.

Chicho Boys also creates and sells its own items including candied apples, its proprietary blend of Chile powder, typically used on fruit cups, as well as standard and/or organic fruit and vegetable baskets, trays, and striking iconographic T-shirts promoting the family business. Store hours are Monday – Saturday, 9:00 am-6:30 pm. Support local business, the local economy and your health by getting your produce from a true local legacy business!

[www.chichoboys.com](http://www.chichoboys.com)  
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Business hours: Mon-Sat  
9am-6:30pm

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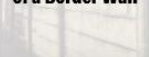
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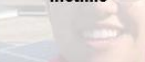
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