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If there's a natural disaster somewhere in the world, Sergio and Hydi Verduzco are likely to create a once-in-a-lifetime meal at their East by Southwest and Golden Triangle restaurants to raise money to help.

They did it after Hurricane Katrina (raising \$11,000) and the tsunami in the Indian Ocean (about \$10,000). So it's no surprise the Verduzcos have done it to support Save the Children in its Japan relief efforts since the earthquake and tsunami there. They have chosen Save the Children because most of the money donated goes directly to help.

They put together a "Kaiseki" dinner March 23 that knocked people's socks off. (It was diners who contacted me and said I had to write about the meal – the Verduzcos tend to do their good deeds quietly.)

Kaiseki is a Japanese tradition that goes back to Shinto monks in the 1400s. It is a series of light dishes meant to accompany tea as part of the elaborate tea ceremony that is part of Japanese culture.

For the first course, Verduzco prepared a tomato stuffed with octopus, cucumber, kelp, san bai su (a Japanese rice vinegar) and sesame. Laurel Vogl told me she's no sake connoisseur, but the sakes served were phenomenal.

The sushi course was house-smoked salmon and plum rice onigiri. After that came the deep-fried course, red snapper tempura in a vegetable nest with rémoulade. That was served with Naughty lemonade (Ty-Ku Citrus, Ty-Ku Soju and lemonade).

The broiled course was pork tenderloin and eggplant with saffron potato and poached asparagus. Dessert was a decadent soy, green tea and lychee brulée served with Ty-Ku Black Sake, Super Premium.

All told, about 50 people enjoyed the feast, raising about \$6,800.

This community never ceases to amaze me. Not only the generosity of all involved – which, let's face it, is easy to take for granted – but the fact that a meal like this was available in our little town far away from everywhere for a country halfway around the world that raised that kind of money. Wow.