



PANACHE

Quarterly Newsletter, Les Dames D'Escoffier Chicago



Summer 2015



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Garden to Table programs flourish at Roberti Community House

By Mary Reidy McMahon

Funding received from Les Dames d'Escoffier was instrumental in helping the Roberti Community House (RCH) not just grow, but also truly flourish in the last year. The Garden to Table programming proved enormously successful.

The raised beds at the RCH were tended by youth in the Junior Green Youth Farm (JGYF), and more than 60 children and adults farmed the nearby community garden. Together these gardens provided fresh produce to a greatly increased number of neighbors throughout the summer and fall months. RCM purchased container pots that were distributed to neighbors, allowing them to grow their own fresh fruits and vegetables at home. During the summer, cooking classes expanded to three each week. Every Monday, RCH moms prepared a nutritious lunch with fresh produce for about 30 teens and staff at the North Chicago Green Belt program. On Tuesdays, cooking demonstrations provided "tastings"

for the children and adults who worked in the community garden. Women in the community declared Wednesdays to be "soup day," and made a variety of soups from garden produce. The RCH utilized the funding received from Les Dames according to the budget we originally submitted with our proposal. The money went to purchasing the following:

For gardening

RCM converted the laundry room at the RCH into a grow station, and bought such items as fluorescent lights, shelves, and seed trays. Seedlings were needed to ensure variety in the gardens and to fill small home gardens and container pots. In addition, large container pots were purchased and distributed to neighbors as well as those families living at the House of Peace, a nearby domestic violence shelter, and those who frequented the Holy Family Food Pantry and Soup Kitchen.

Youth and staff involved in the Junior Green

Youth Farm all received items such as t-shirts, hats, gloves, water bottles, and sunscreen.

Finally, additional garden tools were purchased, such as wheel barrows, rakes, hoes, trowels, a push lawn mower, a weed trimmer and blowers. A small tent was purchased for use in the yard at the RCH so that children and families could sit outside and enjoy garden activities during hot days.

For cooking

The biggest expense in this area was the purchase of food. RCM provided youth in the Junior Green Youth Farm with breakfast and healthful snacks each day. Every Tuesday food "tastings" were held in the community garden, including green smoothies, spinach salads, collard greens, and the like. Food also was purchased for cooking classes throughout the year and community events such as Cinco de Mayo, the JGYF's Open House, Mexican Independence Day, and the Harvest Festival.

| A young volunteer helps on Cinco de Mayo Cleanup Day



| Volunteers work in the daffodil beds.



| Members, from left, Mary McMahon, Polly Peters, Julie Chernoff and Mary Kay Gill (not pictured) helped Maribeth Roberti with the Cleanup Day.





PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Chicago Dames,

It's a very Chicago experience to be writing the Summer Panache President's letter within a week of Memorial Day while shivering,

clad in a down coat for warmth and rueing my dog's immediate need of a walk. We can only hope that by the time you read this, the winter clothes are finally a thing of the past.

It was another dreary and drizzly day in early May when Polly Peters, Mary Reidy McMahon, Mary Kay Gill and I made our way up to Waukegan for the "Cinco de Cleanup" at the Roberti Community House (RCH). Run by the powerhouse ball of energy Maribeth Roberti and a dedicated staff of volunteers, RCH is a sustaining and stabilizing force in the Waukegan community. On this particular day, volunteers planted a flower garden in front of the nearby community food bank and prepared the vegetable garden in back of the RCH. More volunteers were hard at work in the kitchen, preparing the Cinco de Mayo feast for all to share. The intoxicating aroma of enchiladas with mole sauce, rice and beans spurred on the activity.

We came to RCH on a mission from the LDE Board of Directors, charged with delivering a check for \$10,000 on behalf of the Chicago Chapter of Les Dames (see article on page 1). Maribeth was effusive in her thanks, and so appreciative of the support that LDE has provided over the last two years. We, in turn, are thrilled to partner with RCH as part of our Community Outreach program. They would love to have us take part in their upcoming summer programming, so if you are interested, please contact Mary McMahon at dolcemaria08@gmail.com. And watch Amuse Bouche for news of an RCH Festival this summer.

I want to sincerely thank outgoing LDE Board members Suzanne Florek (Bylaws) and Portia Belloc Lowndes (Programs) for their dedicated service this year, and welcome incoming Board members Kathy Ruff and Margaret Laport. Returning Board member Mary Reidy McMahon will take on the brand-new mantle of President Elect. I really appreciate the good work of Nominating Chair Toria Emas and her intrepid team (Jen Lamplough, Rita Gutekanst, Melissa Graham and Jill Haas) in forming the 2015-16 Board.



Les Dames d'Escoffier International

Executive Board 2014-2015

President: Julie Chernoff
Vice President: Donna Pierce
Treasurer: Polly Peters
Secretary: Anne Kauffman
Past President: Jennifer Lamplough

Board of Directors:

Portia Belloc Lowndes
Patricia Erd
Suzanne Florek
Catherine Deevy
Mary Reidy McMahon
Melissa Yen

Bylaws changes proposed

By Suzanne Florek 

Bylaws Committee chair

Les Dames Chicago is like a small business, but one run by volunteers. It is an exceptional time commitment for the busy professionals on the board. So the board has decided that its members need shorter terms in office.

Here is a sampling of items that require their energy:

- Fundraisers
- Scholarship allocation
- Mentoring
- Monthly programs
- Les Dames d'Escoffier International relationships
- Social media
- Administration
- Panache
- Amuse Bouche
- Website updates
- By-law reviews
- New Member induction
- Annual dinners

The Bylaws Committee and the board suggest changes. All members were sent an email with an invitation to review the proposed bylaw changes. The changes will be voted on at the annual June dinner. I encourage you to review the changes. A summary follows:

Currently, the President serves a two-year term (with past board service as a prerequisite). At the completion of her term, the President then serves two additional years as Past President, another board position. It's not inconceivable that she might serve six consecutive years on the Board.

The board proposes a successive three-year President position: the first year as President Elect, the second as President, and the third as Past President. This will alleviate the issue of succession, as it will be clearly delineated. The board also proposes that, with the exception of the Treasurer, all board positions will be one-year terms, with an option of a one-year renewal of non-executive board positions at the discretion of the nominating committee. The Treasurer position, by virtue of both its learning curve and the extensive paperwork, makes more sense as a two-year position.

We hope you agree with the committee's and board's proposals. Please reach out to either President Julie Chernoff or Bylaws Committee Chair Suzanne Florek if you have any concerns.

suzflorek@gmail.com

jchernoff@sbcglobal.net

Meet your new members, inducted in June

By Catherine Koelling, Membership Chair 🐦

The committee noted that these women have demonstrated a commitment to the mission of Les Dames d'Escoffier Chicago. They have attended and participated in multiple Les Dames events and programs over several years and their sponsors have worked with them in a professional capacity, taking the time to get them involved with the organization. Welcome these new members!

Mary Nguyen Aregoni **Owner, Saigon Sisters Restaurant**

Mary has an impressive background in restaurants and business. She had a previous successful marketing, IT and management career at Procter and Gamble, then made a career change into the restaurant business. Mary opened Saigon Sisters in 2009, recognizing the rising demand for Asian food, and now has three locations. She has been called a “go getter,” but also is friendly, gracious and personable. She says she wants to help other women who are just starting out in the culinary field. Her sponsors are Mary Abbott Hess and Meme Hopmayer. maryaregoni@gmail.com



Joan Driggs **Editorial Director, Stagnito Business Information**

As Editorial Director of Progressive Grocer and Progressive Grocer Independent, Joan has earned a professional reputation as one of those “editors who care too much.” She is active in her community, participating in Breast Cancer walks and raising funds for school and church. Joan hopes to help young women as they navigate their path in the industry. Her sponsors are Patricia Cobe and LDEI President Lori Willis. ndriggs@gmholleraail.com



Judy Hevrdejs **Food Writer, Chicago Tribune**

Judy has been covering Les Dames and our members for 20 plus years as a reporter for the Chicago Tribune. Her background includes early work with 4-H and she continues volunteering with that organization. She says that “food-focused journalism, working to translate the joys, confusions and complexities of cooking” for others has been a wonderful focus for her. Her sponsors are Jolene Worthington and Carol Haddix. jhevrdejs@chicagotribune.com



Sandra Holl **Owner/Pastry Chef, Floriole Café**

Sandra says “community service is what led (her) to a career in food ... volunteering as a prep cook at Project Open Hand in San Francisco.” She has been a volunteer with Green City Market, Purple Asparagus and Pilot Light. She started Floriole in 2006 at the Green City Market and now is thriving at her café in Lincoln Park with almost 30 employees. Melissa Graham and Portia Belloc Lowndes are her sponsors. sandra@floriole.com



Ellen King **Owner/Baker, Hewn Baker**

Ellen’s mission at Hewn Bakery is to provide handmade products with the finest ingredients. Her bakery is considered one of the top in the city. She volunteers, is a Bread Bakers Guild member, and is a board member for multiple organizations. An LDE scholarship recipient in Seattle, Ellen relocated to Chicago and developed a passion for baking artisan bread. Her sponsors are Toria Emas and Melissa Graham. ellen@hewnbread.com



Jennifer Lewis **Culinary Educator, Washburne Culinary & Hospitality Institute**

Jennifer is dedicated to her profession and to inspiring her students. As a chef/educator for the last 10 years, she has been able to share her passion for food and hospitality. Jennifer has been the LDE scholarship liaison at Washburne for two years. Community service has been a lifelong ethic. Judith Dunbar Hines and Patty Erd are her sponsors. jlewischef@gmail.com



Nicole Pederson **Executive Chef, Found Kitchen and Social House**

Nicole was nominated by Food and Wine magazine for “People’s Choice for Best New Chef” and by the Jean Banchet Awards for “Rising Chef” and “Best New Restaurant.” Nicole says she is “inspired by” LDE members, and would love to contribute “to bringing together the next generation of young female chefs by mentoring.” Her sponsors are Meme Hopmayer and Karen Levin. nicole@foundkitchen.com



Meet your new members, continued

Karen Rose **Owner and Founder, City Olive**

Karen's background in nursing suggests she is a giving, involved woman. She started City Olive with a commitment to educate her customers about excellence in extra-virgin olive oils. Karen is looking forward to the opportunity to share ideas and contribute to LDE membership events. She often "donates her space, product and services" (at City Olive) to a variety of charitable and educational institutions. Rebecca Wheeler and Sofia Solomon are her sponsors. karen@cityolive.com



Phaedra Ruffalo **Senior Marketing Manager, Newly Weds Foods**

Phaedra has a degree in Food Marketing and Distribution and a graduate degree in Hospitality. Her job at Newly Weds, an ingredient supplier, aligns her passions for food, creativity and leadership. She has volunteered in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization, and looks forward to collaborating with LDE in community service opportunities. Her sponsors are Sharon Olson and Veronica Hastings. phaedra_ruffalo@yahoo.com



Cindi Webber **Director of Catering, Limelight Catering**

Cindi is a hard worker with experience in event planning, fundraising, donor relations, and leadership positions on various boards. Cindi says she is known to never say "no" as a volunteer. She enjoys mentoring both peers and newcomers to the industry. She is honored to be a member of LDE and support women in the culinary field. Polly Peters and Rita Gutekanst are her sponsors. webber@limelightcatering.com



Cheryl Cardello Lucas **Management Consultant**

Cheryl has been reinstated; she previously was a member of LDE Chicago before moving to Florida. Cheryl was with Hyatt for 22 years, and now successfully runs a consulting firm specializing in the retirement industry. Cheryl is recognized for customer service, leadership skills and rapport with residents, employees, and community outreach programs. mcclc@aol.com

Pôts de crème and plans for the future

By *Melissa Yen* 🍷

On April 11, a small group of 2014 scholarship winners and their mentors enjoyed a late lunch at Floriole, which was just named one of the best bakeries in America by Food & Wine magazine. We enjoyed avocado toast and ham and cheese baguettes (the French way with butter and mustard), as well as a lovely salad. The dessert was the creamiest pôst de crème we have ever tasted. Even those of us without a sweet tooth finished it off. Food, was, of course, a hot topic, as was what the future holds for the scholarship winners.

Caitlyn Waite (mentor: Madelaine Bullwinkel) will be at College of DuPage through spring of 2015, and then plans on continuing her education with business classes to prepare her for owning her own bakery. Miranda Kidd (mentor: Toria Emos) announced she just was offered a job at The Drake Hotel in Convention Services. We were thrilled for them both.

Mentor/mentees, from left, Melissa Yen, Caitlyn Waite, Judith Dunbar Hines, Toria Emos, Miranda Kidd



Pôts de crème at Floriole Bakery



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