



Press Release

Ultimate Chef America Delivers Seasoned Results

SOUTHFIELD, MI 8/5/2010

A culinary competition of professional chefs was the focal point of an Optimum Life event at a senior living community in Southfield, Mich. Ultimate Chef America was held on Thursday, July 29, 2010 and earned area senior living chefs awards for taste, creativity and presentation.

A way of life offered exclusively by Brookdale Senior Living at its communities, [Optimum Life](#)[®], focuses on six key dimensions - emotional, intellectual, physical, social, spiritual and purposeful.

[Heritage Southfield](#), a Brookdale Senior Living independent living community hosted the intense competition that involved culinary professionals from 10 regional senior living communities. Altogether, about 800 guests attended, including residents of Brookdale Senior Living communities in the area.

During the event, the culinary professionals from [Brookdale Senior Living](#), industry-leading owners and operators of senior living communities, had two hours to produce four courses with the theme of healthy cooking. Two teams of four chefs participated.

Celebrity judges included:

- Leeza Gibbons, media personality, founder of The Leeza Gibbons Memory Foundation, and author of America's No. 1 book on caregiving, "Take Your Oxygen First."
- Dr. Kevin O'Neil, CMD, FACP of Internal Medicine and Geriatrics and Medical Director of Brookdale Senior Living
- Dave Rozema, a former Detroit Tiger and Major League Baseball pitcher.
- Dino Ciccarelli, professional hockey player who played 19 seasons in the National Hockey League, including with the Detroit Red Wings. He has been recently inducted to the Hockey Hall of Fame, and owns the nightclub Club 22 in Shelby Township, Mich.
- Evelyn Shepherd, 88-year-old resident of Heritage Southfield. She cites her mother as the one who helped develop her cooking skills and a Hungarian cousin who taught her how to bake traditional spicy, Hungarian pastries.

The judges tasted the four courses prepared by the teams, with the following results:

Best Creativity and Best Presentation

- The Culinary Cruisers team consisted of Anthony Petty, Dining Services coordinator for Clare Bridge Farmington Hills; David Beuhler, executive chef for Richmond Place in Lexington; Javier Saco, Dining Services manager for Wynwood Florham Park; Rich Lamoureux, Dining Services coordinator for Wynwood Northville; and Diane Bishop, Dining Services coordinator at Sterling House Saginaw. The team prepared a red cabbage and avocado with raspberry vinaigrette as the starter, an orange ginger grilled salmon with peach salsa as the entrée, a chipotle spiced quinoa grilled white and green asparagus as the side, and a poppy seed crepe with yogurt sauce and a balsamic vinegar reduction as the dessert.

Best Taste

- The Motown Grillers team consisted of Jason Mahaffey, executive chef for Heritage Southfield; Tim Simonds, chef for Trillium Place in Columbus; Dan Scully, director of Dining Services at Westlake Village; Robert Newman, Dining Services coordinator for Sterling House Piqua; and Pete King, Dining Services coordinator for Wynwood Meridian. The team prepared grilled red and golden beets with onions as the starter, apple plum BBQ pork tenderloin with corn and potato hash as the entrée, eggplant napoleon polenta with sun dried tomato tapenade as the side and mocha chip gelato with grilled fruits as the dessert.

"The Ultimate Chef America event in Detroit dazzled and delighted our attendees and participants," said Joska J.W. Hajdu, Senior Vice President of Dining Services for Brookdale Senior Living. "The culinary competition showcased the creativity and talent of our Dining Services professionals. Healthy cooking for seniors was truly taken a new level."

Attendees gained a close-up look at the competitors and the fast-paced competition. They watched the action, and were able to interact with the chefs to ask questions, gain new ideas and learn more about healthy cooking.

Several national partners and sponsors were highlighted in a vendor expo, where attendees could learn more about these companies, ask questions, and receive samples/information.

Educational programs were offered as well, including a seminar featuring Brookdale's Medical Director, Dr. Kevin O'Neil, on the topic of "Food for the Soul," a wine tasting class, and a class presented by the Culinary Arts Institute at Brookdale: The Art of Seasoning which addressed diminishing taste buds brought on by aging.

"I was so honored to be a part of such a tremendous event that benefits such a worthy foundation," said Jason Mahaffey, executive chef for Heritage Southfield. "I enjoyed flexing my culinary creativity to create a heart-healthy dish that focused on presentation, creativity and flavor. It was truly an experience of a lifetime."

In addition, art created by residents of Brookdale Senior Living communities across the nation was auctioned at the Ultimate Chef America event. Proceeds of this auction, which totaled more than \$11,000, went to the Leeza Gibbons Memory Foundation, an organization which elevates the national consciousness of caregiving and fosters a culture of healthy caregivers impacted by chronic illness through programming, universal access to resources, and behavioral research.

"The crowd in Detroit was huge and they all came ready to cheer on their favorite chefs, sample great cuisine, learn new things and contribute to our foundation," said Leeza Gibbons. "The silent auction featured one of my new favorites: the Hands of Wisdom original painting featuring residents hand prints on canvas. Our Foundation is not only blessed to receive the proceeds from these special events, but we are exceptionally grateful for our growing friendships."

National sponsors include Advanced Foods, E. Sam Jones and Sylvania, Direct Supply, Ecolab, Entegra, Fidelity Print, Gulf South, HD Supply, Nestle Professional, Rocky Mountain, Royal Cup, SCA, Simplex Grinnell, Snap Drape, Sysco, Terminix, Tyson, Vitality, Walgreens, World Kitchen, Corporate Imaging Concepts, and IKON.

More information about Ultimate Chef America can be found at <http://www.ultimatechefamerica.com> and <http://www.facebook.com/ultimatechefbrookdale>

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