



Monday, March 23, 1992 O&E

***18

taste buds

chef Larry Janes



Kids learn by helping in kitchen

I've had the honor of learning about food and cooking from some of the best cooks in the world. Pasta from Gullane Bugialli, technique from Julia Childs, wild game from Chef Milos Chielka, sausage-making from Bruce Aldella; a very impressive list of mentors. Indeed. But when people ask me who taught me the most, the hands down award belongs solely to momma.

It was my momma who always allowed me to feel the pie crust with my fingers (it just the right consistency was achieved. It was momma who always slathered a roast or leg of lamb with fresh garlic, or thickened turkey drippings with just the proper balance of milk and flour. When momma shared her knowledge of food and cooking, it was never tutelage, but instead an opportunity to learn. Momma never knew my yeast made bread rise, but her ability to incorporate it in perfect amounts never ceased to amaze. As I stand in my own kitchen today and reminisce the days of dumpling making and picture perfect German Chocolate cakes, I realize now that she was teaching far more than simple cooking.

TO THIS day, she will never fully realize that by making me add ¼ of this and ½ of those my math abilities were being fine-tuned. Momma never knew that her making a monstrous pan of lasagne would prelude an introduction to foreign languages. I can remember the day I first sampled her beet soup, never fully appreciating the fact that it was indeed a geographical Russian borsch. I never realized then that as far as I'm concerned, the term "momma" and "teacher" should be synonymous. But then again, cooking in Wyandotte was never intended to be a lesson, but instead an expression of creativity that was meant simply to fortify and strengthen.

I now know that the foods children eat affect their growth, development, behavior and their ability to learn. How children eat is equally as important. The presentation of food in a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere together with love, care and eye appeal can greatly affect the way children feel about themselves and those around them. Early experiences with food may lay the foundation for lifelong eating habits.

KIDS LEARN most by being actively involved. It only makes sense that children at home and at school be encouraged to be interested in, and involved in the preparation of their food. Creating something beautiful and tasty with food is indeed a rewarding experience for anyone.

Big deal, you say? Other than making a royal mess of the kitchen and chowing down on over-kneaded bread, what can a child learn through working with food?

Food comforts, food nourishes. Food has always been an excellent vehicle for human communication. Learning the skills necessary for cooking helps one to develop a sense of independence. There are many opportunities for children to learn new concepts and language skills while they prepare and eat food.

Planning, buying, preparing and serving food calls for the development of a sense of quantity and measurement. Money, recipe measurements and timing, the dividing of portions and even the setting of the table involve mathematics. Food can awaken the artist or the creative genius by enabling us to notice colors, shapes and textures.

You can make creative food experiences simple enough for a toddler and stimulating enough for a teen. All it takes is a little patience and a lot of love.

See recipes inside.

Rachel Jachym, 3 (left), Chelsea Miller, 4 and Larry Peterson, 4 show off their culinary creations. Night Owl Snack, peanut butter spread on a cracker, decorated with banana slices and raisins to look like an owl.



JIM JAGDELD/Staff photographer

Preschoolers practice art of cooking

By Arlene Funke
special writer

IT IS 10 A.M., Monday, and Jeremy is wearing an apron, ready to make a Night Owl Snack.

Jeremy, a 4-year-old Garden City resident, attends a class called "Pooh's Pantry," through the Garden City Public Schools enrichment program. "Children at this age learn by imitation," said Michele Kramarz, who teaches the class. "We talk about healthy eating habits."

What's a Night Owl Snack? It's peanut butter on a cracker, decorated to look like an owl.

THE ONCE-WEEKLY class is geared to children aged 3 to 5 years. During the 8-week session, they learn how to make simple, tasty snacks.

This class, held at the Cambridge Center in Garden City, is one of several similar local kiddie classes.

At Temple Beth El Nursery School in West Bloomfield, preschoolers have learned to make pancakes, cookies and individual pizzas, using bagels or English muffins.

"It's definitely hands-on," said Joy Kaplan, director of the nursery school.

Preschoolers need close supervi-

sion and lots of help. Classes are small, usually around 10 students.

Children from Birmingham, Bloomfield, Farmington and Southfield attend the Temple Beth El classes. The Garden City program draws from Westland, Belleville and Dearborn Heights, as well as Garden City.

A treat called "Ants on a Log" might sound pretty creepy. But the small fry like to make this concoction — celery sticks spread with peanut butter and dotted with raisins. The celery is the "log," and the raisins are "ants."

Today, the Pooh's Pantry gang will build an elaborate snack, using crackers, peanut butter or cream cheese and a variety of toppings.

"We're going to stick things on a cracker and make it look like an owl," Kramarz said.

JOINING JEREMY around a table are Chelsea Miller, 4, Garden City; Nora Tykoski, 3, of Westland; and Rachel Jachym, 3, Belleville.

The supplies include graham crackers, bowls of sweetened cereal bits, peanut butter and cream cheese, grapes and banana slices.

Larry Peterson, 4, of Inkster, didn't like the banana bread the class made recently. This snack holds promise.

The children got down to business.

Little fingers laboriously spread cream cheese onto crackers. Raisins dribble onto the floor. Slowly, bananas are chopped into small pieces.

While having fun, the kids are developing prereading and premath skills, Kramarz said.

Cracking eggs, stirring batter and spreading cream cheese help develop manual dexterity.

"Children enjoy food better if they prepare it themselves," Kramarz said. "They may even try new foods."

Confidence blossoms, according to Kaplan.

"It makes the kids feel good about themselves," Kaplan said. "It's the 'I can do it' concept."

OFTEN, THE recipes selected are tied into an art project, or the theme from a book.

For example, the Garden City group prepared scrambled eggs, tinted with green food coloring, after reading the Dr. Seuss book, "Green Eggs and Ham."

Cooking or baking is done in a microwave or toaster oven. Kramarz prepares a mimeographed recipe book for each student.

Apparently, many of these kids have had a head start before landing in the class.

Lisa Yount, 3½ of Garden City,



JIM JAGDELD/Staff photographer

likes to help her mom.

"She likes to break the egg," said Roxanne Yount, 34, of her daughter. "She uses the hand mixer to mix pancakes."

Larry Peterson has a play stove at home. But he also helps his mom, Carol Peterson, 32, whip up batches of macaroni and cheese and box

calves. Kramarz likes to talk about choices with her young pupils.

"The fun thing about food is, we like to try different things — to experiment," Kramarz said. "That's why it's nice that there are so many things to eat."

See recipes inside.



STEPHEN CANTRELL/Staff photographer

Beth Yocca (left) and Carol Joliat put their heads together to create a healthy Winner Dinner of low-fat vegetarian lasagna, crunchy tossed salad, Persian sesame bread and fruit salad.

Friends exercise healthy habits

family tested winner dinner
Betsy Brethen

but the ways in which we cook, eat, exercise and grocery shop play a major role in whether we are tight and toned or soft and flabby.

Fit for life or fat for life? The choice is, of course, one's own, with genes and lifestyle being the most powerful shapers of the human body.

There isn't a whole lot we can do about our genes.

Like it or not, we look like we live, and the only permanent way to get rid of excess body fat is to get rid of the habits that caused the problem in the first place.

ONE GLANCE at this week's Winner Dinner Winners, Carol Joliat and Beth Yocca, reveals instantly that they have opted to be fit for life.

Friends for over four years, they met at the Workout Company in Birmingham, where both are aerobics instructors.

Believing that regular exercise and a healthy diet go hand in hand,

they recently put their heads together and submitted one of their favorite low-fat, high fiber menus. It includes a delicious recipe for vegetarian lasagna.

Married and the mother of three boys, Joliat knows what she is talking about when it comes to personal fitness. She teaches aerobics classes five or six times a week and jogs regularly.

At home, she works hard at planning healthy, low-fat meals for her family and tries to make her chil-

Please turn to Page 2

OBSERVER & ECCENTRIC WINNER DINNER

Recipes

HEALTHY LOW-FAT VEGETARIAN LASAGNA

Chock-full of lots of healthy vegetables, this lasagna makes a great family dinner. It can be made in advance and frozen and serves six to eight.

- 1 box whole wheat lasagna noodles, boiled
- 1 container low-fat or non-fat cottage cheese, 8 ounce size
- 1 container low-fat or non-fat ricotta cheese, 6 ounce size
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 ½ teaspoons fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon basil
- 1 can tomato puree, 6 ounce size
- 1 jar Classic pasta sauce, either tomato basil or olive mushroom, 28 ounce size
- ½ cup broccoli flower, cut up
- ½ cup mushrooms, sliced
- ½ cup carrots, finely chopped
- 1 medium summer squash, sliced
- 1 medium zucchini, sliced
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Parmesan cheese
- Low-fat mozzarella cheese

Cook lasagna until just tender. Drain, rinse and let stand in cold water. After combining the two cheeses, refrigerate. Chop up all the vegetables and lightly saute them in 1 tablespoon of olive oil until they are crisp tender.

Combine the can of tomato puree with the jar of tomato sauce. Layer the lasagna noodles in the bottom of a 9 x 13 inch baking dish. Add a layer of cheese, then vegetables, and the sauce. Place another layer of noodles and repeat the process until all the noodles and vegetables are used.

Add the remaining sauce around the perimeter of the noodles. Top with 2 or 3 tablespoons of Parmesan cheese. Other suggestions for toppings are low-fat mozzarella cheese or Alpine Lace cheese. Bake at 400 degrees for 30-35 minutes.

CRUNCHY TOSSED SALAD

- 1 bottle Kraft Free Italian salad dressing
 - 1 head radicchio lettuce
 - 1 head Bibb lettuce
 - 1 head Romaine lettuce
 - ½ cup Michigan dried cherries
 - ½ cup pine nuts
- Wash, dry and tear the lettuces into bite-sized pieces. Add the cherries and nuts and stir gently to mix well. Add desired amount of dressing, toss well and serve.

PERSIAN SESAME BREAD

This tasty bread is delicious when sprinkled with a little bit of Parmesan cheese and broiled in the oven just before serving. It can be found at Strawberry Hill in West Bloomfield.

HEALTHY FRUIT

Combine your choice of different fruits like melon, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries and bananas, and sprinkle with a little bit of fat-free granola made by Healthy Food, available in most health food stores or in the health food section of your grocery store.