

Seniors Go for the Gold!



Gold—it's a highly sought-after precious metal used in crafting some of the finest keepsakes known to man. Throughout history, its lure has fueled epic battles. And on Thursday, April 22, 2010, its beauty kindled one more as three teams chopped, flipped and sizzled to claim the “Golden Spatula” at Menorah Center for Rehabilitation and Nursing Care’s (Menorah) Latke Throwdown Championship.

During the competition, teams “Mishpucha,” the “Golden Girls” and “Las Damas” put their best recipe forward for a panel of experts. The judges—Administrative Assistant Gail Varon; Pat Sheridan (family member of a resident); Kingsborough Community College (Kingsborough) Professor Susan Edne; and Kingsborough student Timmikar Mann—evaluated the potato pancakes for the right combination of texture, flavor and more importantly crisp.

“I’m a lover of latkes,” declared Edne. “Today, I’m looking for latkes that are tasty, not too greasy with just the right amount of salt and some originality.”

Edne, a mental health professor, oversees Kingsborough’s internship program at Menorah. Once a week, she accompanies students to the facility to assist the recreation department with activities, such as resident community walks.

Each team consisted of one resident and two staff members. Team Mishpucha included Rhoda Nussbaum, Administrative Assistant Erika Kleinberg and Recreation Therapist Alexis Maron, while Ruth Gold, Administrative Assistant Diane Bauer and Secretary Rise Portnoy held it down for team Golden Girls.

Residents and staff prepared their latkes from scratch using recipes passed down through the generations. While the recipes stood the test of time, only one came out victorious. Team Las Damas—Lillian Bellows; Human Resources Coordinator Yvette Martinez; and Administrative Assistant Wendy Caceres—copped the coveted prize for their tasty creations.

“The competition was good but don’t forget I was a cook for 60 years! Of course I was going to win, even though it wasn’t my recipe. I’m just that good,” retorted Bellows with a smile.

What was Las Damas game-winning strategy? They used Social Worker Inna Kemel’s Russian grandmother’s recipe. While all three latke formulas consisted of the usual suspects—potatoes, onions, salt, pepper, flour and eggs—Las Damas added a bit of flare with carrots.

Throughout the fun-filled afternoon, Assistant Director of Recreation Helen Muller assumed the duties of mistress of ceremonies. She helped keep the salivating judges and residents at bay as the savory smell of latkes engulfed Menorah’s auditorium.

Muller and team, led by Director of Recreation Nancy Sondag, keep Menorah’s residents both active and happy throughout the year with a number of stimulating events like the latke throwdown. Whether turning the facility’s auditorium into a food network studio or a full-out street carnival, Menorah always guarantees a good time.

To read more about the latke throwdown, check out the piece featured in the NY Daily News’ Faces and Places section [here](#) and also the Bay News’ coverage [here](#).

