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TASTE OF THE NETWORK

Nothing brings people together like food

by Amy Lynn Hardy
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Ten senior living facilities came together at Amherst Center for Senior Services on July 23 for Taste of the Network, presented by the Network in Aging of WNY, Inc. The event benefited the Jerry Flaschner Humanitarian Award Scholarship Fund and gave the community a taste of what these facilities serve in-house. Each team brought two dishes and guests brought their appetites—because there was *so much* to sample.

Food portions were generous and the diversity impressive, everything from colorful tea sandwiches and juicy sliders to aromatic Peruvian ceviche and savory French crêpes. The mood was convivial as presenters dished out servings and struck up conversations with visitors. Teams were judged in five categories, but an additional people's choice award meant guest opinions counted, too!

"We love doing this event because it's a showcase for us to show everybody what we do for our residents: our special parties, the different kind of events we put on for them," says Glenwell Assisted Living and Memory Care's Marketing Director, Stacey Jazinski. "This gives the community a little taste of what we do for our own residents."

Glenwell's table was beautifully decorated in black and pink French décor with their staff donning pink berets and scarves, but other facilities also sported incredible decorations. Winner of Best Presentation, Solstice Senior Living at Amherst celebrated the 2024 Olympics in Paris with red berets and Olympic t-shirts, a background of Parisian lanterns, an Eiffel Tower, and a blow-up Mona Lisa painting. The Wheatfield Commons displayed Italian flair; its chef was decked out in an Italian flag and chef hat. He also created a flavorful entrée of osso buco and truffle potatoes, winner of the People's Choice Award.

"I'm very thankful to have found our chef Paul," says Christine O'Connor of Wheatfield Commons. "He has made a world of difference in our community and in the lives of our seniors. He brings something fun and new every single day and puts smiles on everybody's faces. He and his team have been a real treasure."

Many of these facilities cater to live-in residents, but others do home visits and bring Western New Yorkers fresh meals daily. For example, "FeedMore WNY provides nutritious meals and a daily wellness check to our homebound elderly neighbors. Each meal meets one third of the daily recommended allowances," explains Jennifer Klein, RD, CDN, and FeedMore WNY Senior Director of Client Services. "Not only do we offer nutritious food, but also dignity, hope, and a brighter future to our WNY neighbors in need. We are proud to represent our organization at the Taste of the Network." FeedMore took home the prize for Best Vegetarian.

The scholarship recipient honored at Taste of the Network was Haley Spiess, a personal care aid at Bristol Village who recently transitioned to the role of medication assistant. She plans to use the scholarship funds to complete her RN program this fall at ECC and Daemen University this fall, and as well as toward future education costs as she pursues her goal to become a nurse practitioner specializing in geriatrics.

Food can always bring people together, put smiles on faces, and lift spirits. Taste of the Network did just that.

Who was there?

Presenters:

Amherst Center for Senior Services

Bristol Village

Brompton Heights

Elderwood Village of Bassett Park

FeedMore WNY in partnership with Hearty Helpings, Inc.

Glenwell Assisted Living and Memory Care



Photo by Amy Lynn Hardy

Heathwood Assisted Living and Memory Care

Peregrine Senior Living at Orchard Park

Solstice Senior Living at East Amherst

Wheatfield Commons

Winners:

Best Entrée:

Chicken française, *by Glenwell*

Best Vegetarian:

Poached salmon on a potato cake with capers, red onion, egg, and dill cucumber sauce, *by FeedMore of WNY* with Hearty Helpings, Inc.

Best Ethnic:

General Tso's chicken and rice cups, *by Peregrine Senior Living* at Orchard Park

Best Dessert:

French macarons, *by Glenwell*

People's Choice Award:

Beef osso buco, *by Wheatfield Commons*

Best Table Presentation: Solstice Senior Living

Amy Lynn Hardy is a former teacher and freelance writer.