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Bay Area Chefs Serve Up Gluten-Free Fun at Treasure Island

San Francisco Gluten-Free Cooking Spree draws large crowd despite traffic mayhem

Ambler, PA (November 18, 2009)- In spite of the [Bay Bridge closure](#), [Critical Mass bicyclist protest](#), police pursuit of a [local carjacking](#) and overall pre- Halloween chaos, over 400 people came out to celebrate the gluten-free lifestyle during the 2009 San Francisco Gluten-Free Cooking Spree.

The annual affair that took place Friday October 30th at Treasure Island brought area chefs, doctors, and media personalities into the kitchen for a competition to earn the title of 'Best Gluten-Free Dish'. Food connoisseur and area media personality Narsai David emceed the festivities, which featured extraordinary gluten-free creations provided by local chefs and restaurants.

"The celiac disease community is one used to overcoming obstacles with patience, determination, and creativity. We do it everyday," said NFCA founder and president Alice Bast.

The evening's gluten-free menu also included hearty hors d'oeuvres, desserts, beer and wine, a special treat for guests with celiac disease. Celiac is an autoimmune disorder affecting about 3 million Americans. NFCA's Gluten-Free Cooking Sprees seek to raise awareness of this disorder, which goes undiagnosed in about 95% of those with the condition. Currently the only treatment is a gluten-free diet, eliminating foods containing wheat, barley and rye.

Winning the evening's main event was Amy Phillips of Three Senses Gourmet, whose fabulous chocolate soufflé took home first place honors. The evening's distinguished judges also gave Adrianna Lopez Vermut of Pica Pica Maize Kitchen and her famous Arepas second place with honorable mention going to Chef Mark Dommen of One Market for his delicious crab cakes.

The judging panel included: Chef Bill Orton, Executive Chef of Disney's Culinary Academy, Dr. Phillip Zimbardo, internationally recognized psychologist at Stanford University, and Dr. Gaurav Aggarwai of Panorama Capital, and Dr. Rugmini Shah's gluten-free food loving granddaughter, Julie Lynch.

"NFCA is the premier group in helping people with celiac disease, and I was delighted to be a part of this first class event. The NFCA Team was amazing! I support the organization's efforts to educate the food industry, and to increase the availability of healthy, delicious gluten-free foods for the millions of Americans who need them," Said Chef Orton.

2009 San Francisco Gluten-Free Cooking Spree participating restaurants included One Market Restaurant, Pacific Catch, Park Place Cupertino, Sol Foods Restaurant, Three Senses Gourmet, Full Fridge, and Pica Pica Maize Kitchen.

Guests also enjoyed a dynamic Marketplace of gluten-free vendors providing product sampling, and coupons, as well as goodie bags and raffle prizes.

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"The amazing success of this event shows that people with celiac disease will go out of their way to enjoy delicious gluten-free food and come together as a community!" said event volunteer Jennifer Iscol, who also directs the North Bay Celiacs support group and awareness campaign.

The event honored Dr. Chaitan Khosla of Stanford University and the Celiac Sprue Research Foundation for his outstanding leadership in celiac research. Dr. Gary Gray, previous San Francisco Gluten-Free Cooking Spree honoree and professor emeritus at Stanford University was on hand to present the 2009 award to Dr. Khosla.

Information and photos from the 2009 San Francisco Gluten-Free Cooking Spree are available on the NFCA website (www.CeliacCentral.org) archived events page.

About Celiac Disease

Celiac Disease is an autoimmune digestive disease that damages the small intestine and interferes with absorption of nutrients from food. An estimated three million Americans have celiac disease yet 95% remain undiagnosed, resulting in a fourfold increase in the risk of early death and numerous debilitating conditions including infertility, neuropathy and even cancer. The only treatment is a lifelong gluten-free diet. Left untreated, people with celiac disease can develop further complications such as other autoimmune diseases, osteoporosis, thyroid disease, reproductive health issues, and some cancers.

About the National Foundation for Celiac Awareness

The National Foundation for Celiac Awareness (NFCA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness of celiac in order to gain prompt and accurate diagnosis for those suffering, support the health and wellbeing of those with the disease, and facilitate research that will better understand the disorder and find a cure. Visit www.celiaccentral.org for information.

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