

Fundraiser crowd sweet on BC3's apple crumb cake

Feb. 25, 2017



“Men Who Cook” raised \$2,500 for Armstrong OneWire’s Breaking Bread Initiative, the St. Vincent de Paul food bank and the American Heart Association’s Heart Walk on Feb. 25, 2017.

(Lyndora, PA) More than 200 taste-testers meander among tables at the General Butler Vagabond Center during the inaugural “Men Who Cook” fundraiser, sampling Larry Sassone’s Japanese-style gyoza, Mark Mares’ Sparky’s sweet road-killey chili and Jay McKain’s cakeball shakes.

While participant Dr. Nick Neupauer, president of Butler County Community College, says he does not cook – “That,” echoes his wife, Tamatha, “is true. Not a thing” – he didn’t leave the masses hungry, not for dessert and certainly not for dinner conversation about BC3’s affordability, accessibility and quality of education.

Ready to dish out 225 samples of BC3’s apple crumb cake, created by instructor Jennifer Taylor’s hospitality program students, Neupauer was also ready to dish about BC3’s recipe for success.

“Awesome, awesome dessert,” Nancy Cingolani, of Butler, exclaims near the BC3 table, behind which the Neupauers greet guests and distribute information about BC3’s 55 two-year career and transfer programs, its 21 certificate programs and upcoming open houses.

“So far,” Cingolani says, “the best dessert that I have tried. I was telling everyone over at my table and we want the recipe. Now can we get the recipe?”

The Butler Radio Network developed “Men Who Cook” as a fundraiser for Armstrong OneWire’s Breaking Bread Initiative, the St. Vincent de Paul food bank and the American Heart Association’s Heart Walk.

Kevin Boozel acknowledges his fare may not fair well with American Heart Association types. His traditional naked chicken alfredo and his spicy hot mess naked chicken alfredo are each laced with “heavy cream and parmesan and,” he says, “lots of butter.”

“I know this is for the American Heart Association and all,” the Butler County commissioner says, laughing. “But this is about portion size. We are giving small portions away. Letting people know it’s OK to eat how you like – but you have to do it in moderation.”

Moderation wasn’t on the menu for many of those visiting the BC3 table.

Dottie McCall, of Butler, was making her second trip for an apple crumb cake.

“Oh my! Delicious!” she says. “Just mouth-watering. It’s delicious.”

Had she made a return trip to any of the other 21 tables?

“No,” she says. “Oh my gosh, delicious. I am going to take one back for my husband.”

No word whether Paul McCall ever got that taste of BC3.

Victor Cherry, however, did.

The father of organizer Vicki Hinterberger says he’s waiting for another bite at the apple crumb cake everyone is talking about.

“It’s very good, very good,” he says. “The best I ate today. That was exceptionally good and sweet.”



Apple crumb cake, created by BC3 instructor Jennifer Taylor’s hospitality program students, is shown Feb. 25, 2017, at “Men Who Cook” in Lyndora.

Will he have another?

“Well, if it’s on the house,” he says. “You’re not supposed to eat seconds until everybody goes through.”

BC3’s confection was also the apple of Angie Mohr’s eye.

“It is so good,” the Butler resident says. “It is not too sweet. It’s perfect. It has a lot of good cinnamon taste. And it’s really good for you.”

How many had she eaten?

“Only one so far,” Mohr says, “but I have only just begun.”

Hinterberger, president and general manager of the Butler Radio Network, said she thought about creating the fundraiser in mid-January.

“I thought, ‘You know what? I want to do something in February because people get so tired of being inside,’” Hinterberger says. “They have cabin fever. And so we decided to put something together to showcase some of the men who cook in our county, men who are from all different walks of life.”

There was Sassone, of the Butler Blue Sox; Mares, of the state Department of Transportation; McKain, of the Butler Radio Network; Jack Cohen, of the Butler County Tourism Bureau, and his chicken noodle soup; Dave Crater, of Friedman’s Freshmarkets, and his pierogis; and state Rep. Brian Ellis, R-11, of Lyndora, who represents part of Butler County and whose blackened chicken pasta with spinach, tomatoes and feta cheese with a side of sweet sautéed mushrooms represents a love for his mother, Diane.

“It’s in memory of her tonight,” Ellis says. “She is the one who taught me to cook. She passed away a few years ago, so I am dedicating my cooking to her tonight.”

Up to 120 tickets were sold in advance, Hinterberger says. More were being sold at the door. Gifts inside 14 baskets were raffled, a 50-50 drawing was held and nonperishables were collected for the St. Vincent de Paul food bank.

“The main way it is going to help is with the food donations that are coming in,” John Gibson says between bites of a BC3 apple crumb cake.



A sign promoting Butler County Commissioner Kevin Boozel’s fare is shown Feb. 25, 2017, at “Men Who Cook” in Lyndora.

Gibson – president of the Butler District Council of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, which operates what he says is the largest food bank in Butler County – finishes his BC3 apple crumb cake.

“This was delicious,” he says. “Very, very good. Apple crisp in a little cupcake cup. A very small one. Very good. Very tasty. The apples are crisp. They’re not soggy.”

The St. Vincent de Paul food bank serves between 600 and 700 clients or families a month, Gibson says.

“That equates to over 2,500 people,” Gibson says, adding that about 25 percent are veterans, and 30 percent, senior citizens.

“What we try to do is give three meals per day for three days per family member each month,” he says.

Across the banquet hall, Neupauer is trying to convince Tamatha that he is able to cook -- “When we were in West Virginia, I used to make spaghetti,” he says. “Did you?” she replies – and hopes there are some apple crumb cake leftovers “to take home.”

Not looking good.

“I don’t know whose recipe this is for the apple crumb cake, but it is the best,” says Margie Kloker, of Butler. “The best I have tasted.”

Her husband, Nelson, takes a sample from the plastic tray.

“Oh my God! That is really good,” he says. “That was excellent.”

As was the event, Hinterberger says, which raised \$2,500.



Chicken pasta with tomatoes, spinach and feta, created by state Rep. Brian Ellis, R-11, of Lyndora, is shown Feb. 25, 2017, at “Men Who Cook” in Lyndora.