

By Eloise Marie Valadez
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Restaurant Scene: Savoring International Cuisine And A D'vine Affair



Eloise Marie Valadez | The Times Scott Farrell, from left, Harry Karahalious and student Jaime Montanez, representing Briar Ridge Country Club, won the Golden Skillet Award at "Adventures in International Cuisine" on Thursday at Avalon Manor.

Eclectic dishes representing flavors from around the globe were sampled at "**Adventures in International Cuisine**" on Thursday at **Avalon Manor** in Merrillville.

The second annual event, presented by **Northwest Indiana Adult Guardianship Services Inc. (NIAGS)** and the **ACF Chefs of Northwest Indiana**, featured stations starring themed recipes from Germany, Spain, Italy, France, the Orient and Mexico.

Proceeds from the gala will benefit NIAGS, a nonprofit group which provides guardianship services for at-risk adults and adults who are incapacitated. A portion of the proceeds will also benefit culinary arts scholarships provided by Chefs of Northwest Indiana.

"The stars of the evening are the chefs and the work that they do," said **Teddy Flores**, executive director of NIAGS. "They're a wonderful group of guys and women that you should know about."

Flores said the event this year drew nearly 200 people, which doubled from last year.

Participating chefs were **Jack Mix**, **James Galligan** and **Kyle Fouch** representing **Comfort's Catering**; **Ruben Calvos**, **Nico Luna** and **Frank Kwiecien** representing **H & R Catering**; **Tim Merkel** and **Jason Delgado** of **Giovanni's**; **Scott Farrell** and **Harry Karahalious** of **Briar Ridge Country Club**; **Rick Delby**, **Terry Zych**, **Elida Abeyta**, **Beverly Seleb** and **Ivy Tech** culinary students representing **Ivy Tech**; and **Peter Kaiafas**, **Polo Sanchez** and **Adam Brown** representing **Avalon Manor**. Working their magic at the global dessert station were **Cheryl Molenda**, president of the chef's organization; **Alice Pickford** and **Barbara Henning**.

Molenda said there's always a good camaraderie with the group and it's wonderful "to come together to help people."

One of the auction prizes of the evening was a six-course meal for 12 people that will be offered at **Jack Mix' Comfort's Catering**. Mix said all the chefs who participated in Thursday's fundraiser will cook the lavish meal, which sold for \$1,200 in the auction.

"We're going to plan the dinner and the food will keep coming out," Mix said, adding he was happy to participate in this important fundraiser.

During the event, the French station received the Golden Skillet Award, given to the chefs who's food attendees liked best. Manning that station, which featured chicken coq au vin, potatoes Dauphenoise and grilled asparagus with roasted walnuts and brie were Scott Farrell, Harry Karahalious and **ProStart** culinary student **Jaime Montanez** of **Hammond Area Career Center**.

"We're delighted to win. This is what it's all about for us -- cooking and making people happy," Farrell said.

D'Vine Affair

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago will present its 10th annual "**D'Vine Affair, A Tasting of Fine Wines**" from 2 to 6 p.m. Sunday at the Union League of Chicago.

The event benefits self-sufficiency programs in Cook and Lake counties. Guests will enjoy more than 250 wines representing West Coast, Chilean, Australian, Argentinean and European vintners. Two wine seminars will also be featured. Tickets are \$100 per person. **FYI:** www.catholiccharities.net/dvine or (312) 655-7912.