

CHEF'S SECRETS

Behind the Scenes

10

By Cristina Taylor & Loida Santos

To attendees, Chef's Secrets may simply be a few hours on a Sunday where they get to enjoy the luxurious setting of the de Seversky Mansion all for the sake of a good cause. Behind the scenes, this event is months in the making.

During the springtime, the Development Committee (comprised of our Management Team and Development Team) has production meetings to discuss ideas for the event, such as honorees, themes, colors/designs. Outreach materials, such as letters and forms are created at this time to help enable the team to start soliciting donations for our raffle baskets and auction items as soon as possible from local and national businesses. Many companies require a few months advance notice (especially for items such as airline tickets, resort stays, theme park passes, etc.).

Our graphic design team works with us every step of the way creating all of the materials for outreach, as well as 'save the date' cards, invitations, signage for the event, website upkeep, the commemorative journal and certificates of thanks that we send each chef and vendor who participate. All of these items are created in-house which enables us all to bounce around ideas. However, throughout this process, communication between departments and adhering to a time table is key in helping to ensure that things run accordingly. The Graphic Department also creates the descriptive titles for each basket once they have been assembled by the event coordinators. Each basket is displayed in its own unique grandeur.

The de Seversky Mansion has been the home of Chef's Secrets for the past six years. We have been fortunate to have such an amazing space to host the event as well as cooperation from the mansion's staff the day of the event. From creating floor plans, event set up and all throughout the evening; you will find the

de Seversky staff working hard ensuring that our guests are enjoying the event.

The chefs, the vendors—None of this would be possible without the talented chefs who have joined us over the years graciously donating their time and culinary creations for the event. We are so fortunate to have chefs and vendors joining us year after year from amazing restaurants all across Long Island. Initially, we reach out to those who joined us the year prior with the hopes that they'll come back. We have been so fortunate to have many who have stated "I will be back next year!" before the event is even over! When summer is in full swing we go full force contacting new establishments who we may hear of through word of mouth, online research, newspaper reviews, attending other community events, as well as personally patronizing these establishments. Contacting the chefs is no easy feat. Due to their hectic schedules, as well as owning/working at different locations, many times we will be contacting them later in the evenings or on weekends to try and touch base. And yes, there have been quite a few times where we have driven all over Long Island to touch base with a chef in order to obtain a signed contract.

On the day of the event, set up starts at 9:00am. This includes putting together centerpieces, setting up the auction items, arranging raffle baskets in an eye catching manner to entice guests to purchase raffle tickets, placing signage throughout the venue and ensuring that table set up (for guests, as well as chefs/vendors) goes as planned. Agency staff members present offer their hospitality to guests throughout the evening, all while giving a history about the agency, its mission and what their respective jobs within it are, all to give a little more insight into the services we provide to the community.

Planning is currently underway for Chef's Secrets 10 to be held on Sunday, November 2nd, 2014. We hope to see you there!

The **AFFORDABLE** Care Act

By Maria Beccari

WHERE TO GO FOR INFORMATION AND HELP

In 2013 Americans were introduced to the Affordable Care Act. This was by no means an easy introduction. With it brought confusion, concern, and questions — lots of questions. The United States Government and the State of New York have been working overtime to shine a guiding light on the process to make it as easy as possible. Requiring health insurance for every American hasn't been an easy transition and there have been many bumps in the road. However, there are resources and people available to help answer your questions and guide you. If you're one of the millions of Americans who doesn't have insurance because it's not offered at work, past insurance prices were astronomical, pre-existing conditions disqualified you, or you just never thought about it, here's your opportunity to have affordable insurance.

New York Residents can find information and answers to their questions on affordable health care at HeathCare.gov or nystateofhealth.ny.gov. When you visit the HeathCare.gov website you will find information on coverage rights and protections and even preview plans. The plans are tiered in Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum categories. Each of those categories brings with it a different level of coverage and required deductible and co-pay, with Bronze carrying with it the lowest monthly payments, but higher deductible and co-pay. Platinum being the premium service for a higher cost but minimal to no out-of-pocket expenses when using the insurance. You, as the consumer, need to research your options and pick what best fits your needs and income level. At the nystateofhealth.ny.gov website, New Yorkers from every region of the state can visit to price out the many different plans that are available to them. Depending on your income level and the number of individuals in your household, you may even qualify for some type of financial help. Once you visit the site and begin the application process you will be asked numerous questions which will help determine the type of help you are eligible for and what plans you qualify for. You will also find resources that can connect you to individuals who can help you sign up for plans and answer your questions.

NY State is one of only 15 States that invested time and resources to create its State Run Health Exchange (nystateofhealth.gov) to benefit all of their residents. Because of this dedication by NY State government to its residents and the courage to do what's morally right, ALL New Yorkers have the option to purchase affordable and reasonable health insurance plans spanning all economic tiers and the offer of State supplied monetary subsidies to qualified individuals who are experiencing economic hardship. Thank you to NY State for viewing residents as an asset and not a burden.

You as a consumer now have the right to have insurance that is affordable and carries with it the guarantee to cover—for free—important preventive services such as blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes (type 2) and depression screenings, as well as wellness visits, diet counseling, certain immunizations and more. Take the time to visit these sites and see what is available to you, and take control of your health.

