

# Food

## 'Tis the Season...for charitable eating

What's on the horizon for folks who love to do good as well as eat good ... err, make that, eat well?!

News of three important culinary fundraisers has come across my desk recently, and all merit attention. Yes, times are still tough and if you're anything like me, there's not a lot of extra \$\$ burning a hole in your wallet. That said, I'm always up for a fun food adventure – and if you purchase tickets to even one of these worthy causes, you'll no doubt have a full stomach and glad heart as a result.

### 'TASTE OF THE WORLD'

Taking them in chronologic order, let's start with "Taste of the World," sponsored by the West Orange Rotary and happening this coming Monday, Feb. 27, from 6 to 9 p.m. at The Mayfair Farms on Eagle Rock Avenue in West Orange.

The "Taste" will present international cuisine from area restaurants featuring Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Ethiopian, Italian, Middle Eastern and Contemporary American menus. There will also be a cash bar, raffles, prizes, and live entertainment. Some of the restaurants and bakeries offering up their specialties include DiPaolo's Bakery of Verona, Egan & Sons, Greek Taverna, Hat City Kitchen, The Manor, Mark and Julie's Ice Cream, Mesob, and Strip House at Westminster Hotel in Livingston.

According to a press release, "Taste of the World" is the largest fundraiser sponsored by the Rotary Club of West Orange, and this annual event has become an integral part of the club's ability to sponsor its many programs and activities. Those include providing college scholarships, giving dictionaries to every third-grader in West Orange, funding a local summer camp for the disabled, and supporting local first aid squads. For advance ticket sales and information, call 973-768-0773.

### TONI'S KITCHEN

Who's celebrating 30 years of extraordinary community service this year? None other than Toni's Kitchen, the food ministry at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in



CHOICE CUTS  
KAREN SCHLOSS DIAZ  
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80 "guests" are offered gracious hospitality and a nutritious, flavorful, and delicious meal every Thursday, Friday and Saturday at lunchtime. Toni's Kitchen also offers a diverse and wide range of services to its many grateful guests, including food takeaway, health screenings, and a groundbreaking computer literacy program. Located at 73 South Fullerton Ave., Toni's Kitchen is named in honor of its first cook, Antoinette "Toni" Green. I had the great honor of spending a day in Toni's Kitchen several years ago, watching the kitchen pull together a terrific hot meal under the direction of Kitchen Manager Laura Feire, and observing the gracious and respectful manner in which food was presented and served. It's a memory that has long stayed with me.

The 30th Anniversary Benefit for Toni's Kitchen takes place Saturday, March 3, from 7 to 11 p.m. at The Woman's Club of Upper Montclair, 200 Cooper Ave. The event features music, dancing, silent auction, and a reception followed by dinner. Tickets are \$75. For more information visit: [www.toniskitchen.org](http://www.toniskitchen.org).

### 'TASTE OF MONTCLAIR'

It's time to put charity back on the table this year as Restaurant Week 2012 kicks into gear. And have you heard about "The Taste of Montclair"? It's the brand-new and highly anticipated kickoff to Restaurant Week, which is scheduled from March 20 through April 1.

Taking place Monday evening, March 19, "The Taste of Montclair" promises to be a terrific (and affordable) grazing event, featuring tasting portions and treats from approximately 40 acclaimed area restaurants and vendors, including Ab' Digg, Applegate

Four Seasons Kabob House, Miss Nicky's Gourmet Toffee, Ruthie's BBQ, Trattoria Rustica, Upstairs, and The Wood Pit.

This fun and scrumptious-sounding evening is taking place at The Grove, 691 Pompton Ave. in Cedar Grove, from 5:30 to 9 p.m. Tickets are \$40 in advance and \$50 after March 14, and are available online, by mail, at retail locations in town and at the door. Check out [www.montclairrestaurantweek.com](http://www.montclairrestaurantweek.com) for additional details, including all Restaurant Week participants.

Past Restaurant Weeks have raised close to \$15,000 for Montclair's three largest food charities: the Human Needs Food Pantry, Toni's Kitchen, and The Salvation Army Feeding Program. This important two-week program helps the hungry while celebrating Montclair's greatest resources: our acclaimed restaurants. Monies raised from "The Taste" will also go to local charities. Both events are sponsored by the Rotary Club of Montclair.

Here's how Restaurant Week works, in case you haven't experienced it in years past. Participating restaurants will offer prix-fixe menus for \$31 (or less). Every penny of the extra \$1 charged will be donated to the Montclair Rotary Foundation and distributed to the aforementioned three charities.

And please, don't get all over the hard-working volunteer organizers for scheduling "Taste of Montclair" at a Cedar Grove venue! I know for a fact that they searched here in town for a space that could accommodate the anticipated number of attendees (plus serving space for all 40 vendors), only to come to the decision that they had to head one town over for a site that fit their specs.

So hey, those of you who can – why not meet up with friends at one of these awesome events, or send in a donation if you're otherwise engaged? Even better, send an email or pick up the phone, and ask if they need a helping hand. At the very least, you know you'll be fed well as a volunteer!

*Karen Schloss Diaz is a partner of diaz • schloss communications, a Montclair-based communications firm.*