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For release: February 15, 2007

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Young chefs cook up some tasty fun during Arapahoe County Contest

AURORA, CO --- Last Saturday, great smells drifted in from the 2007 Arapahoe County Creative Cooks Contest. The annual competition invited 4-H members, ages 5-18, to cook up some tasty fun and showcase their culinary expertise.

Contestants planned, prepared and presented a balanced menu according to nutrition values and the food pyramid and chose a specific theme that was incorporated into their menu, place setting with centerpiece, and appearance. Each contestant chose one dish to serve to a judge who not only tasted the food, but also asked questions regarding nutrition knowledge, preparation, etc.

Unique and creative entries could be found throughout the competition. The Military Training Camp entry, complete with barbed wire biscuits, was one participant's way to tribute his brother who just joined the Marines.

An event favorite was the Through the Wardrobe entry, a take off from the Chronicles of Narnia. Every piece of the entry breathed the theme from their costumes to the menu, backdrop and place setting. Each member of the group became a character of the book and they prepared meals that they believed would be served during that time. Peter's Pot Pie and Mrs. Beaver's Bread were a tasty treat.

For those who can't wait for Saint Patrick's Day, try to recreate Melissa Bowen's Dublin Dippers. "I compete in this contest because it's fun," said Bowen, who would like to be a chef when she grows up. The 9-year-old Junior Champion is well on her way.

Theresa Kollath, 4-H alumni, has been judging the competition for more than five years. "4-H provided me with so many opportunities growing up; it's a duty and a privilege to be able to give back to the program. Each member puts a lot of thought and creativity into their projects. One participant loves spicy chili but decided to tone it down for the competition."

4-H is a great way for children to have fun and learn valuable life skills at the same time. Arapahoe County is accepting membership applications for those who are interested in competing in the 2007 Arapahoe County Fair. The deadline for animal projects is March 1.

For more information, call CSU Cooperative Extension 4-H office at 303-730-1920 or visit www.arapahoeextension.org.

Complete Awards List

All contestants received a Participation Award. Champion and Reserve Champion awards were chosen by judges. Champions in the individual and team categories qualify to compete at the State Creative Cooks Contest. The Popularity Award was a secret ballot where all those in attendance could vote for their favorite.

Junior Individual (ages 8 - 10)

Champion and Popularity Award: Melissa Bowen, Shamrock Cafe, from Byers (Families Inc. 4-H Club)

Reserve Champion: Amanda Vaughan, New Year Blast, from Aurora (Windmill Creek 4-H Club)

Intermediate Individual (ages 11 - 13)

Champion and Popularity Award: Abigail Hanouw, Old West Chuckwagon Dinner, from Aurora (Smoky Hill 4-H Club)

Reserve Champion: Desiree Bowen, The Demolition Diner, from Byers (Families Inc. 4-H Club)

Senior Individual (ages 14 - 18)

Champion and Popularity Award: Rebecca Gaffney, A Jolly Holiday with Mary Poppins, from Aurora (Smoky Hill 4-H Club)

Reserve Champion: Colton Bowen, Buck's Bunkhouse Grill, from Byers (Families Inc. 4-H Club)

Senior Colorado Specialty Individual

Champion and Popularity Award: David Pack, Fall Harvest Feast, from Parker (Pack Family 4-H Club)

Intermediate Team

Champion and Popularity Award: Katie Wilson and Patience Thomas, Dinner in Italy, from Aurora (Smoky Hill 4-H Club)

Intermediate Colorado Specialty Team

Champion and Popularity Award: Marie Pack and Aurora Pack, Folchart's Welcome Home Dinner, from Parker (Pack Family 4-H Club)

Senior Team

Champion: Ashley Vaughan and Savannah Smith, Mid Summer's Might Dream, from Aurora (Windmill Creek 4-H Club and Smith Family 4-H Club)

Reserve Champion and Popularity Award: Kelly Wentz and Brittney Pelton, AlaKi'i, from Strasburg (Antelope Crossing 4-H Club)

Intermediate Group

Champion and Popularity Award: Katie Wilson, Jacob Wilson, Patience Thomas, and Serena Thomas, Pirates of the Caribbean, from Aurora (Smoky Hill 4-H Club)

Senior Group

Champion and Popularity Award: Amy Einarsen, Eric Einarsen, Alec Luckenbach, Angel Luckenbach, Ashley Vaughan, and Zach Vaughan, Through the Wardrobe, from Littleton and Aurora (Windmill Creek 4-H Club)

Reserve Champion: Adrienne Rubin, Ashleigh Holmes, Lindsey McCormick, and Abigail Hanouw, Bella Italia, from Centennial and Aurora (Bit of Class 4-H Club)

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