

[Brandywine Table]

Indulge for a Cause

ANNUAL SWEET CHARITY EVENT
DISHES UP SWEET TREATS AND
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Alyssa Thayer

EACH MARCH, LOCALS WITH A SWEET TOOTH CON-
verge for the annual Sweet Charity fundraiser, benefitting the
Chester County Community Foundation. The Foundation has
been working to connect “people who care with causes that matter”
since its inception in 1994.

“One of our goals is to make philanthropy fun and accessible,” says
Beth Krallis, Marketing & Communications Officer at the Founda-
tion. And what better way to do that than by bringing folks together
for a night of learning, networking and treats.

And what a treat it is. This annual gathering recruits a dozen or
so of Chester County’s finest pastry chefs, bakers and dessert makers
for a friendly and delicious competition. An esteemed panel of judges
decides the winner of “Best Dessert” and “Most Creative,” while
guests cast their votes for “Most Popular.”

Last year’s winners included John Serock Catering with the “Most
Popular” Arancini Dolci (fried rice pudding), Mizuna Catering with
the “Most Creative” Fried Banana Spring Rolls, and General Warren
snagged “Best Dessert” with a Vegan Chocolate Raspberry Layer Cake.

When asked what helped General Warren take the cake (pun
definitely intended), Krallis thinks it’s because “they think outside
the box and the judges and participants respond well.” She imagines



Sweet Charity Event takes place March 30

we’ll see a lot more of that at this year’s event, taking place March
30 at the Whitford Country Club in Exton.

We caught up with Patrick Byrne, proprietor of General Warren
(which is celebrating its 275th anniversary this year), to get a culinary
perspective on the event. Although they have been participating for
years, Patrick and Pastry Chef Andy Sciarretta always come up with
something unique for the event.

“We start discussing right after the New Year. We consider what’s
trending in desserts, items we want to feature from our menu, or
sometimes we try something completely different.” Patrick wouldn’t
tell us what they’re making for 2020, but he did share, “If it’s suc-
cessful at Sweet Charity, we’ll try to work it into our dessert menu.”

If you plan to attend this year’s Sweet Charity event, bring both
your appetite and your business cards. Not only is it a great cause,
filled with delectable desserts (you had us at chocolate), “the event is
also a friend-raiser, helping people build new relationships and learn
more about philanthropy in our area,” says Beth.

“Oh and I almost forgot to mention,” she chuckles “we have a fun
tradition of having our volunteers and interns walk around in giant
cupcake costumes. It makes for quite a photo op.”

And we have the photos to prove it!



General Warren, a perennial Sweet Charity winner, is celebrating its 275th anniversary of
offering historic hospitality. See 1910 and 2006 photos of the historic building in Malvern.



General Warren’s Patrick Byrne
with “Best Dessert” award.



Recipes

*We can’t all create Eagles helmets from ganache or intricate to-scale gin-
gerbread houses like General Warren’s Executive Pastry Chef Andy Sci-
arretta, but that shouldn’t stop us from getting into the kitchen and whip-
ping up something scrumptious. Get cooking with these indulgent delights
from Chef Andy. Caution: Licking the bowl may be unavoidable!*

Vegan Chocolate Tower Cake

*While Chef Andy wouldn’t hand over the exact recipe of the 2019
Winner, Vegan Chocolate Layer Cake, he has given us this fabulous
vegan cake recipe to try. And it involves applesauce!*



Make It Look Pretty

*They say we eat with our eyes first, so making your dessert
look pretty is a no-brainer. Here are a few tips from the pros.*

1. Contrast is Key – Garnish with something that pops and
gives visual interest. E.g., bright red berries on a monochro-
matic plating.

2. Dust & Dazzle – Those powdered sugar-dusted designs in
restaurants are simple to do at home. Load your powder of
choice (powdered sugar, cocoa, or for a dash of color, grind up
freeze-dried fruit) into a strainer, sieve or shaker. Hold 10 inches
from the surface of the dish and tap gently for desired coating.
** Up the Wow factor: Use a stencil to create a fancy design
with the powder!

3. Textural Components – If you’re using nuts, coconut or dried
fruit in your dessert, save a portion to pour over the top. It’s a
sneak peek of what’s inside, plus guests enjoy the extra texture
when they dive in.

4. Crafty Coco – If you have a chocolate bar on hand (dark
or milk chocolate are easier to work with than white) you have
everything you need to create a drizzle, curls or shavings.

• **Drizzle** – Double boil or microwave until liquid (don’t let it
burn!) to create a hardening drizzle. Drizzle directly over your
dessert, or onto wax paper for a design to be added once it
has hardened.

• **Curls** – Microwave a 4–6 inch piece of the bar for a few
seconds to soften it up without melting. Run a vegetable peeler
along long edge to create smooth curls.

• **Shavings** – Use the peeler on a room temp or chilled choc-
olate bar to create small delicate shavings.

** Store all garnishes in the refrigerator and add them just
before serving.

5. Complements Only – Resist the urge to use a random herb or
ingredient that wasn’t in the recipe as a garnish, particularly if it
doesn’t match the flavors of the dessert. Although visual beauty
is important, it should never come at the expense of that perfect,
sweet bite.

6. Temp Control – Whether it’s as simple as a chocolate curl or
as intricate as a spun sugar cage, ensure your frills will hold by
adding them to the dessert only after both the dessert and deco-
ration have cooled. Heat is often the enemy!



½ C. vegetable shortening (for greasing pans)
2½ C. all-purpose flour (½ C. for greasing pans)
¾ C. cocoa
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
1½ C. granulated sugar
½ C. vegetable oil
1 Tb. vanilla extract
1½ C. warm water
½ C. applesauce

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease two 8” round cake pans with vegetable shortening and ½ cup flour.

Sift the remaining 2 cups flour with other dry ingredients into a large mixing bowl.

In another bowl combine oil, vanilla, warm water and applesauce and stir together. Add wet ingredients to the dry ingredient bowl and mix by hand until smooth.

Pour into prepared pans and bake for about 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center of cake comes out mostly clean.

Cool cakes completely before covering with vegan buttercream frosting (below).

Makes 2, 8-inch round cake pans.

Serves 10 to 14.

Vegan Vanilla Buttercream

1 lb. confectioner’s sugar, sifted
⅔ C. vegan butter (soften to room temp)
brands include: Miyoko’s or Earth Balance
1 Tb. Crisco shortening
1 Tb. vanilla extract
⅓ C. almond milk

Optional Chocolate Variation: Add ⅓ C. cocoa powder to sugar and shortening mixture

In a mixer fitted with paddle attachment, cream confectioner’s sugar, vegan butter, shortening and vanilla on medium speed. Scrape bowl down several times to ensure a smooth mixture. Mix for about 5–6 minutes.

** Add almond milk and cocoa powder, if desired. (May require more milk, depending on the desired consistency of icing.)

Praline Pecan Cheesecake

This decadent crowd favorite was the winner of Sweet Charity two years ago. It can easily be transformed into a gluten-free recipe using gluten-free graham crackers available at many grocery stores.

For the Crust:

1½ C. graham cracker crumbs (about 12 crackers)
1 Tb. granulated sugar
5 Tb. melted butter

Prepare sides of a 10” springform pan with nonstick spray and set aside.

Pulse the graham crackers in food processor until they are a sandy texture. Combine all ingredients together until you get the texture of damp sand.

Press crumb mixture into the bottom of the springform pan.



For the Cheesecake:

1 lb. cream cheese or 2, 8-oz. packages, room temp.
1 C. granulated sugar
4 whole eggs
1 egg yolk
⅓ C. heavy cream
1 Tb. vanilla extract

In mixer, cream the cream cheese and sugar together on low speed, about 6–8 minutes. Add eggs one at a time, scraping bowl down after each addition. Mix for another minute. Then add in heavy cream and vanilla

Add vanilla in a slow stream, with mixer running on low speed. Scrape down bowl and mix for 2 minutes.

Pour batter into prepared 10” springform pan with graham crust on bottom and sides of pan.

Bake at 325° for about 45 minutes. Add pecan topping (recipe below) and continue baking for another 25 minutes or until nuts are golden brown. Insert a small paring knife in center of cheesecake to check for doneness (knife should come out fairly clean).

Cool cheesecake on counter and refrigerate overnight.

For the Pecan Topping:

½ C. butter, room temp.
½ C. packed light brown sugar
4 C. chopped pecans

Cream butter and brown sugar. Then add pecans and mix by hand until pecans are thoroughly integrated.

Spread pecan mixture on top of cheesecake and return to oven.

Makes one 10” springform pan. Serves 10 to 14.

Chocolate Crème Parisienne

This light, silky smooth mousse is made from just two ingredients. Make sure to grab the good stuff when choosing your chocolate—quality ingredients make all the difference!



2 C. heavy cream
1 C. chocolate, chopped fine (high-quality milk or dark chocolate, such as Lindt brand)

Bring cream to a simmer. Pour over chocolate and let stand for 3 minutes, then stir to emulsify.

Cool in refrigerator for 4 to 6 hours (overnight is best).

Whip in mixer, fitted with wire whip attachment, until the consistency of whipped cream (or forms stiff peaks).

Serve in dessert glasses with fresh berries.

Makes six 6-oz. glass cups

Optional: Make it fancy! Scoop mixture into a pastry bag fitted with a large star tip and pipe into dessert glasses. ♦

Alyssa Thayer found her love of food at an early age, frolicking around her mother’s organic farm and eating her weight in berries and snap peas each summer. She is a self-proclaimed urban farm girl, whose mission is to bring inspired ideas to life, passionate people together, and good food to every table.



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